

Syrian minister praises UNIDO

AMMAN (Petra) — Syrian Minister of Industry Ali Tarabulsi on Wednesday paid tribute to the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) for its help and support for Arab industrial conference. Mr. Tarabulsi was speaking at a meeting held here to discuss a report by a technical committee formed by the Arab Conference on Industrial Development. He said the committee's recommendations were aimed at coordinating Arab industries and revitalising economic activities and increasing investments in Arab industries. The meeting was attended by Minister of Industry and Trade Rajai Muasher, Arab Organisation for Industrial Development Director Hatem Abul Rashid outlined the deliberations of the last conference held in Damascus in 1984. Earlier, Mr. Tarabulsi was received by Prime Minister Zaid Rifai at the Prime Ministry. The meeting was attended by Dr. Muasher and Mr. Rashid.

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King sends good wishes to Tunisia

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein sent a cable of good wishes on Wednesday to Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba congratulating him on the occasion of his country's Independence Day. The King wished President Bourguiba continuing good health and happiness and the Tunisian people further progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince visits army unit

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Wednesday visited the Third Royal Armoured Division and met with its commanders and troops and was briefed on their duties and training programmes. Prince Hassan also inspected the unit's activities and watched its target shooting exercises. The commanders and soldiers of the unit presented Prince Hassan with a gift on the occasion of his 39th birthday, which falls on Thursday. Prince Hassan presented gifts to veteran commanders of the division. Later Prince Hassan watched a soccer game between the division and the Royal Jordanian Air Force.

Amin to head JTV, Arida takes over radio

AMMAN (J.T.) — The cabinet Wednesday announced the appointment of Mr. Mohammad Amin as director of Jordan Television as of March 23, 1986. Mr. Amin, who had served as director of news at the television station, replaces Dr. Mohammad Kheir who has been appointed by the cabinet as director of Al Hussein Youth City. Another cabinet decision announced Wednesday appointed Mr. Issam Arida as director of Jordan Radio to replace Mr. Saleh Al Masha'ni who will retire on March 23. Mr. Arida had served as director of Al Hussein Youth City until his new appointment.

Al Dustour to be public owned

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Press and Publishing Company, the publisher of the Arabic daily Al Dustour, announced on Wednesday that it was going to become a private shareholding company. Jordan Press and Publishing Company, which also publishes the English-language weekly, The Jerusalem Star, is to sell 65 per cent of its shares to public and private institutions. A similar decision was taken last Monday to transform the Jordan Press Foundation that owns Al Rai and the Jordan Times into a similar share holding company.

2 Palestinians killed in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Gunmen killed two Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip town of Khan Yunis on Wednesday, and fled in a car, Israeli officials said. Israeli authorities placed a curfew on parts of the town and later arrested two suspects, they said.

INSIDE

- * Chinese leader calls for world peace in Cairo speech, page 2
- * Conference urges more powers and higher revenues for municipalities, page 3
- * Shurmann: U.S. media have little concern for Mideast, page 4
- * Australian youth give headache to government, page 5
- * Bruno clears path towards world title challenge, page 6
- * UAE banks seek means to control bad debts, page 7
- * 250 Filipino exiles return home, page 8

Saudi and Kuwaiti leaders hold urgent talks on Gulf war

Iraq, Iran report new air raids

Combined agency dispatches

RIYADH — King Fahd Ibn Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia and Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah of Kuwait were holding talks behind closed doors on Wednesday as Iraq and Iran reported air attacks against each other's positions in the five-and-a-half-year-old Gulf war.

Sheikh Jaber flew into Riyadh unexpectedly and went straight into session with King Fahd. The media in both countries reported this without elaborating, however, it was believed that the meetings would cover the Gulf war and the crisis in the world oil market.

Arab diplomatic sources said that the meeting underlined the urgency of the situation in the wake of the Iranian occupation of parts of the southern Iraqi Fao Peninsula.

The Saudi Press Agency reported that Sheikh Jaber arrived on a visit to his brother King Fahd.

The diplomats said that the Saudi media was carefully playing down the meeting "so as not to provoke the Iranians."

The two leaders examined the military situation in view of the recent Iranian threats to Kuwait, said the diplomats who refused to be identified. They said that King Fahd and Sheikh Jaber also explored means of mediating a settlement to the war.

Iraqi leader phones King

His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday received a telephone call from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the Jordanian News Agency, Petra, said. It said President Hussein briefed the King on the situation at the battlefield.

President Hussein told the King that the Iraqi armed forces were in "full control of the situation and dealing devastating blows to the Iranian army," Petra said. The president also said that the Iraqi forces have completed the task of driving the invaders from the northern sector of the front, the agency said.

An Iraqi military spokesman said on Wednesday Iraqi warplanes attacked an Iranian military camp near the south Iranian city of Ahwaz.

(Continued on page 2)

Chirac meets potential ministers before replying to Mitterrand

PARIS (AP) — Conservative Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, almost certain to be France's next premier, held a series of meetings with potential ministers on Wednesday and said he was to answer President Francois Mitterrand late Wednesday or Thursday morning.

Mr. Chirac's neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) party, the centre-right Union for French Democracy (UDF) and minor rightist candidates won a slim majority of 290 seats Sunday in elections for a new 577-seat National Assembly to end Socialist control.

Mr. Mitterrand, the Socialist president who has two years to go in his term, met with Mr. Chirac for more than hours Tuesday to discuss the formation of a new government. It would be the first time in the 28-year history of the Fifth Republic that the president and premier were not of allied parties.

"I can tell you that there were no real problems with Mr. Francois Mitterrand," Mr. Chirac told reporters at his city hall office, denying reports there had been several points of contention. "I will give my answer to the chief of state tonight or at the latest tomorrow morning."

Mr. Chirac was the only conservative leader called in by the president and obviously was Mr. Mitterrand's choice. Official sources at the presidential palace said Tuesday night that the "ball is now in Chirac's camp."

A number of leading figures of the victorious parties went to city hall for talks with Mr. Chirac.

undoubtedly "to discuss the make-up of a new cabinet. Jean Lecanuet, president of the UDF, said he had been asked to become a minister.

"Mr. Jacques Chirac asked me to join his government," Mr. Lecanuet told reporters. "I asked him for time to think about it."

Other leaders of the five-party UDF coalition also met with Mr. Chirac, including Francois Leontard, head of the Republican Party, Pierre Mehaegier, president of the Centre for Social Democrats, Andre Rossignol of the Radical Party and Jean-Claude Gaudin, president of the UDF group in the National Assembly.

Also among those meeting with Mr. Chirac was Charles Pasqua, the outspoken RPR leader in the senate.

Arafat renews call for international conference

DUBROVNIK, Yugoslavia (Agencies) — Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), renewed his call for an international conference on the Palestinian issue, the state-run Tanjug news agency reported on Wednesday.

In his talk with Yugoslav President Radovan Vukobratovic, the PLO chairman also voiced his readiness to continue talks with Jordan on joint action.

Mr. Arafat arrived on Tuesday for a two-day visit to Yugoslavia, which was expected to reaffirm its support for the Palestinian cause.

In his first meeting with Mr. Vukobratovic, Mr. Arafat said the PLO favours a conference on Palestine with the participation of all permanent U.N. Security Council members and all interested parties, including the PLO as "the legitimate representative of the Palestinians," said Tanjug.

Mr. Arafat was quoted by Tanjug as saying he was ready for further talks with His Majesty King Hussein, "provided the fundamental legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, above all its right to self-determination, were fully respected."

Mr. Vukobratovic noted that "Israel's aggressive and expansionist policy remains impervious to all proposals for solving the Middle East crisis in accordance with internationally recognised standards," said Tanjug.

The Arafat-Vukobratovic talks were continuing Wednesday.

TASS said the alleged violation by two U.S. warships last week was a deliberate act of provocation and linked it with the 1983 shooting down of a South Korean airliner.

Moscow made an official protest on Tuesday that the cruiser Yorktown and destroyer Caron had penetrated six miles inside Soviet waters in the Black Sea on March 13.

The U.S. Defence Department admitted that the ships had entered Soviet waters but said they were entitled to under international law.

TASS, in a report from New York, quoted U.S. newspaper reports that the alleged violation was part of a major spying operation by the Pentagon to assess Soviet defences.

"It is not the first time that the U.S. administration has played irresponsibly with the fate of the world in pursuit of its political objectives," the agency said.

It recalled the South Korean airliner, shot down by Soviet fighters in September 1983 after straying off course over Soviet territory.

TASS launches new attack on U.S. over Black Sea 'violations'

MOSCOW (R) — The official Soviet news agency TASS accused the Reagan administration on Wednesday of sending warships into Soviet waters as part of a strategy to reconquer public opinion to higher arms spending and its "Star Wars" missile defence plans.

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OPEC asks 5 rivals to cooperate

GENEVA (Agencies) — OPEC asked five non-OPEC oil producers on Wednesday to help it cut oil supplies in order to drive prices back up, delegation officials said. They said no firm commitments were given.

The request came after three days of OPEC deliberations in which the ministers said they wanted to cut production but could not agree on details. The OPEC talks were adjourned while the 13 group leaders met with their five non-OPEC rivals.

Fernando Pegado, a member of the Angolan delegation, said OPEC did not request specific production cuts, but he said his country was willing to help the group try to reverse the price slide.

OPEC delegates said most OPEC states favour oil production cuts in principle, but sharing them out in practice may still be beyond the powers of their emergency conference here.

"The most likely outcome is to suspend the meeting," said one senior delegate, weary by the Geneva talks which have brought little change in entrenched positions.

And Kuwaiti Oil Minister Ali Al Khalifa Al Sabah, a key figure at the current conference, declined in an interview to rule out its failure.

The call for production cuts has been spurred by the collapse of world oil prices since OPEC (the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) resolved last December to defend its market share.

"There is a general consensus of all OPEC ministers that we have to reduce our production to the required level to restore prices," said Ecuadorian Oil Minister Javier Espinosa Teran.

He said this level would have to be below OPEC's current output ceiling of 16 million barrels per day (bpd), but declined to name a figure.

Mr. Espinosa has previously suggested a 15 per cent cut in OPEC exports, but has ruled out a reduction in his own country's official quota.

In the same way, Iraqi delegation leader Ramzi Salman told journalists his country was prepared to cut its output, but not to its 1.2 million bpd OPEC quota.

This is the nub of the problem facing OPEC, and its invitation to non-OPEC producers to cooperate is seen by many analysts as no more than an attempt to share the pain.

Delegates say the ministers are studying a range of options for the next quarter of 1986 for overall OPEC production of between 13 million and 17 million bpd.

The lower figure would probably push up prices, which at around \$14 a barrel are now the lowest in real terms for a decade, but the higher range would do little or nothing to reduce the persistent world oil glut.

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Nsour returns from OIC trade talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Planning Abdullah Nsour returned to Amman on Wednesday at the end of a visit to Turkey where he took part in the meetings of a special committee formed by the 46-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). The meetings, held in Istanbul, discussed economic and trade cooperation among Islamic nations. In a statement upon returning to Amman the minister said that he discussed with Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal Jordanian-Turkish economic and trade relations and the prime minister expressed his country's desire to respond favourably to Jordan's request for adjusting the balance of trade, now in favour of Turkey. The committee meetings, Dr. Nsour said, paved the ground for a general OIC meeting to be held in Kuwait in February, 1987, and a number of resolutions concerning financing projects in Islamic countries.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath with their four children, (from left to right) Princess Rahma, Prince Rashid, Princess Sumaya and Princess Badiya.

TCC becomes public company

By Rana Sabbagh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) board of directors on Wednesday announced the conversion of the corporation into a public shareholding company with all shares to be owned by the government as the first stage towards changing the status of the government-owned TCC into a full-fledged commercial entity.

A consultancy agency to be named later would advise on restructuring TCC into a commercial entity in order to pave the way for appointing a new board with private sector representation to decide on the public share issue. Communications Minister Muhieddine Al Hussein said.

The minister said he did not expect the government to relinquish 100 per cent of the shares.

"Since the government will own all TCC shares prior to its total privatisation, it will decide on the total percentage of shares it wishes to maintain or sell," Mr. Hussein said.

Mr. Hussein, who is also chairman of the TCC board of directors, told the Jordan Times that he expected the corporation's total privatisation to be completed by the end of 1987 or by the first quarter of 1988.

"It will take up to one and a half years from now or even two years before TCC is completely privatised," Mr. Hussein said.

Increased profitability and efficiency and an improvement in the quality of telecommunications services are the main aims behind privatising TCC, Mr. Hussein.

(Continued on page 2)

Swedish police release Palme murder suspect

STOCKHOLM (Agencies) — Swedish police on Wednesday released a 32-year-old man charged with involvement in the murder of Prime Minister Olof Palme, saying a key element in the evidence against him had collapsed.

A police spokesman said the man, named by the prosecutor's office on Tuesday as Ake Lennart Viktor Gunnarsson, an extreme right-winger, had left police headquarters where he had been detained since last Wednesday.

The spokesman declined to confirm a Swedish news agency report that the man, who was due to have appeared in court for possible indictment on Thursday, had been given police protection.

Stockholm police chief Hans Holmer said the case against the man had collapsed after a confrontation with a key witness "didn't give us what we expected." Several witnesses had earlier said they saw Mr. Gunnarsson near the scene of the killing.

"An important link in the chain of circumstantial evidence has broken," he said.

Despite a prosecutor's request to keep the suspect in custody for further investigation, there would be no court hearing on Thursday as announced earlier.

Mr. Holmer, briefing reporters on the progress of Sweden's biggest manhunt, said a second arrest had been made two days ago. The second man, arrested for illegal possession of a weapon, was also to be released shortly, he said.

He said the second arrest was made in "the fringe" of the investigation.

Mr. Holmer said the police had on Wednesday carried out the biggest sweep to date of the central Stockholm area where Mr. Palme was killed, looking for the murder weapon — a .357 Magnum Smith and Wesson revolver — but he did not report any finds.

Asked whether Mr. Gunnarsson's release meant he had been cleared of the killing, Mr. Holmer said: "We cannot say that."

(Continued on page 2)

Weinberger, Kohl reach basic agreement on SDI

GRAFENWOEHR, West Germany (AP) — U.S. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger said on Wednesday that he and Chancellor Helmut Kohl reached "basic agreement" for West German participation in the American "Star Wars" research plan.

"We're very pleased that the chancellor and I have been able to work out basic agreement on the remaining issues for the strategic defence initiative (SDI)," Mr. Weinberger told a news conference at this NATO base in Bavaria.

The official name of the "Star Wars" plan is SDI. The West German participation would be limited to private companies, unlike the agreement with Britain that also calls for a governmental role.

"I look forward to the agreement being signed in a very short time now," Mr. Weinberger said. He added that the talks with Bonn officials would result in two accords, one dealing with participation by West German private firms and the other with sharing of research results.

Dr. Kohl later told reporters that "two or three" major points had been resolved in the talks with Mr. Weinberger, and that he would send Economics Minister Martin Bangemann to Washington next week to conclude the negotiations.

Neither commented on earlier reports that Dr. Kohl's coalition government had relaxed two major conditions for West German participation in "Star Wars."

In Bonn, high-ranking government sources said that West Germany may relax two conditions for letting private companies take part in "Star Wars."

The sources, who spoke to the Associated Press on the condition they not be identified by name, said the Bonn government may be willing to sign a general participation agreement and negotiate a "technology transfer" agreement later.

Crown Prince celebrates 39th birthday

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan celebrates his 39th birthday.

Born in Amman on 20 March 1947, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Ibn Talal is the youngest brother of His Majesty King Hussein and heir to the throne.

Crown Prince Hassan was educated at Harrow and Christ Church, Oxford, England, from where he graduated in 1967 with a BA Honours in Oriental Studies.

Since his return to Jordan, he has played an active role in Jordan's political, economic, military and social affairs. His Royal Highness holds the rank of Honorary General of the Jordanian Armed Forces.

On 14 November, 1968, Crown Prince Hassan married Sarvath Khujista Akhta Banu, youngest daughter of the late Mohammad Ikramullah H.P.K., C.L.E., K.C.M.L., of a distinguished Pakistani family. They have four children: Princess Rahma (born 13 August 1969), Princess Sumaya (born 14 May 1971), Princess Badiya (born 28 March 1974), and Prince Rashid (born 20 May 1979).

In 1970, Crown Prince Hassan founded the Royal Scientific Society, geared towards the development of research relevant to the socio-economic development of Jordan. A year later, he was entrusted by Royal Decree with the task of overseeing national development planning in Jordan.

In his capacity as Jordan's ombudsman for development, he has been associated with the 1973-75, 1976-80 and 1981-85 development plans. His mark on the resulting revitalisation of Jordan's economy has been appreciated at

(Continued on page 2)

Crown Prince celebrates 39th birthday

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09:45	Cairo (R)	11:50	Vilnius, Amsterdam, New York (R)
09:45	Aqaba (R)	12:15	Frankfurt, Copenhagen (R)
	Demascus (R)	12:45	Istanbul (R)
12:45	Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)	12:50	Larnaca, Zurich (SR)
13:45	Kuwait (KU)	13:40	Larnaca (R)
14:50	Jeddah (SV)	13:45	Doha, Moscow (GF)
14:50	Larnaca (R)	13:50	Cairo (R)
17:15	Baghdad (IA)		
17:50	Cairo (R)		
	London, Paris (R)	15:40	Kuwait (KU)
18:45	Athens, Demascus (R)	15:45	Jeddah (SV)
18:45	Frankfurt (R)	18:30	Baghdad (IA)
18:10	Istanbul (R)	19:30	Riyadh (R)
20:55	Frankfurt, Demascus (LH)	19:30	Kuwait (KU)
00:25	Baghdad (R)	19:40	Dhahran (R)
01:40	Beiroute, Istanbul (J)	19:45	Bahrain, Doha (R)
		20:10	Baghdad (R)
		20:30	Doha, Karachi (R)
		20:45	
		21:15	Abu Dhabi (R)
		03:25	Istanbul, Beiroute (J)

DEPARTURES

06:30	Istanbul, Amsterdam (KL/M)
07:30	Aqaba (R)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Chief of staff meets Pakistani delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Fathi Abn Taleb Wednesday received the commander of the Pakistani defence college, Major General Ahmad Tassim, and the accompanying Pakistani military delegation currently on a visit to Jordan. Attending the meeting were Pakistani Ambassador in Amman Ehsan Rashid and the Pakistani military attaché, Maj.-Gen. Tassim and the guest delegation were briefed on the history and development of the Jordanian Armed Forces. The delegation includes teachers and students from the Pakistani defence college.

Chinese cultural team ends visit

AMMAN (Petra) — A Chinese cultural delegation has left Amman at the end of a week long visit to Jordan. During their visit, members of the delegation held talks with Minister of Information and Culture Mohammad Al Khatib and other officials. The delegation signed an agreement for the implementation of a cultural protocol between China and Jordan and they visited Yarmouk University, the University of Jordan and a number of archaeological sites in the country. The delegation was seen off by senior officials from the Ministry of Culture and Chinese embassy staff.

Princess Taghreed opens charity bazaar

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Taghreed, deputy honorary president of the Jordanian Women's Charity Society, Wednesday opened a charity bazaar organised by the society on the occasion of Mother's Day. On display at the bazaar are golden Korans, silverware, pottery, embroidery, clothes as well as carpets. The bazaar is being held at the Orthodox Club in Amman and the proceeds will go to the society.

AAU delegates visit Yarmouk

AMMAN (J.T.) — Participants in the 19th session of the Association of Arab Universities (AAU), which concluded its meetings here on Tuesday, visited the Yarmouk University campus on Wednesday. The visitors were briefed by the university's president, Dr. Adnan Badran, on the development of the university. They also visited the computer centre and the students activities centre.

Sharari, Turkish envoy discuss sports ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Youth Hisham Al Sharari Wednesday received Turkish Ambassador in Amman Samih Balan for discussions on ways of strengthening cooperation between Jordan and Turkey in youth affairs and sports. The ambassador extended an invitation to Mr. Sharari to visit Turkey to acquaint himself with sport and youth activities there.

Arabic academy president returns

AMMAN (Petra) — President of the Jordan Academy of Arabic Abdul Karim Khalifeh returned to Amman from Cairo after taking part in the 52nd conference of the Cairo Academy of Arabic which concluded on Tuesday. Participants discussed working papers presented by Arab scholars on the terminology of engineering, physics, law, biology, agriculture, sport, oil, chemistry, medical sciences and electronics. Dr. Khalifeh presented working paper on facilitating the learning of Arabic in heritage. Dr. Khalifeh also attended the meetings of the Federation of Arab Academies of Arabic, also held in Cairo.

Work underway on new water network in Irbid

IRBID (Petra) — The Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) has embarked on installing a water network in the Irbid region which is expected to extend for 380 kilometres; 235 kilometres of which are mains and 145 kilometres as links to homes and residential areas, the WAJ announced here Wednesday. The whole cost of the project, the announcement said, is expected to be JD 5.5 million.

The announcement said that the new network will replace the present system and the whole project should be completed by March 1987. According to the announcement, the WAJ has completed part of the work at Hanina region and has embarked on executing the second stage. In Irbid

city alone, the total length of the network is expected to be 220 kilometres and a local company has been awarded a contract to carry out the whole project, the announcement added.

It said that the WAJ started work on wastewater treatment plant in 1984 and 80 per cent of the work has been completed. Nearly 50 per cent of the mechanical and electrical works have also been done and the whole scheme will be completed in the coming year.

According to the statement, the total cost of the plant and the sewerage project in Irbid is expected to reach JD 16 million. The announcement also said that sewerage links to homes will be laid early next year.

Country and Western nights to raise money for CPF

AMMAN (J.T.) — Red Steagall and the Coleman County Cowboys, a Western swing band, will visit Jordan courtesy of the American Centre. The band will perform at the Holiday Inn Amman for two nights, Friday, March 21, and Saturday, March 22, at 8:00. Profits from the sale of tickets will go to benefit the Cerebral Palsy Foundation (CPF). Tickets are JD 10 per person and include a barbecue buffet dinner, according to a press release issued by the American Centre in Amman.

Red Steagall is a singer, guitarist, song writer, and music publisher recognised as one of the best country and Western performers in the world today. Besides Red Steagall, the band consists of Reggie Brown, Richard O'Brien, Guy

Hammon, Lynn Massey, James Wood and Rick Garner.

The band will be touring the Middle East as part of the observance of the 150th anniversary of Texas Independence. Songs by Red Steagall and his band have been in the top ten on Country and Western music charts in the U.S. Red Steagall and the Coleman County Cowboys were recently invited to perform before President Ronald Reagan and almost 450 of his guests at the White House, the release said.

Red Steagall and the Coleman County Cowboys have performed in Germany, Spain, Australia and Canada in addition to appearances in more than 100 major rodeos in the United States.

Course on poultry production concludes at regional centre

AMMAN (Petra) — The Amman-based Regional Poultry Training and Development Centre (PTDC) Wednesday turned out another batch of people who have completed a training course on poultry production. The participants in the course, which lasted several weeks, were oriented towards modern techniques of poultry industry, the management of poultry flocks, and the prevention of poultry diseases. The course was held at the PTDC, which is under the supervision of the Agriculture Ministry.

Al Saudi addressed the graduates who came from seven Arab countries. He paid tribute to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) which helped to establish the centre in Jordan.

The participants toured a number of poultry farms in Jordan and inspected work at the fitter processing factory. A PTDC spokesman said that the centre plans to hold courses on the management of poultry farms in the Near East region.



RIFAI RECEIVES TARBULSI: Prime Minister Zaid Rifai Wednesday receives visiting Syrian Minister of Industry Ali Tarbulsi. Attending the meeting were also Minister of Trade and Industry Rajai Masher and Arab Organisation for Industrial Development Director Hatem Abdul Rashid (Petra photo)

New Islamic financing body convenes in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — A newly-formed federation of national institutions concerned with financing development projects in Islamic nations held a meeting in Amman on Wednesday. The participating organisations all come from countries which are members of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) which is based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

According to Mr. Rajab Al Sa'ad, the vice president of the IDB, the two-day meeting will decide the location of headquarters for the federation. Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have offered to host the federation's premises. The meeting will also discuss the selection of an administration committee comprising nine members and will elect a secretary general for the federation and draw up a general annual budget, Mr. Sa'ad added.

Mr. Sa'ad, who has been elected chairman of the meeting, said that the federation is designed to launch financial activities and to encourage research programmes in banking and financing in accordance with Islamic principles and laws. The federation will also be concerned with developing revenues and providing facilities and training courses to promote the financing of development projects in Islamic nations, he continued.

A separate meeting for the IDB's executive directors was held in Amman on Wednesday under the chairmanship of the bank's president Ahmad Ali. The two-day meeting will discuss matters pertaining to financing foreign trade operations among Islamic nations, development projects undertaken in a number of Islamic countries and the IDB's participation in these projects. The meeting will also discuss an agenda for the Saturday meeting of governors of Islamic Banks in Amman.

The Islamic Banks founded in Arab and Islamic countries are all branches of the IDB which was established in 1975 to offer loans to Islamic nations and to consolidate economic development by helping to carry out social and economic projects in Muslim countries.

Special committee to study problem of narcotics

By Sa'ad G. Hattar
Jordanian Staff Reporter

AMMAN (Petra) — A special committee formed recently to assess the problem of narcotics in the Kingdom and to study ways of stemming the growing use of illicit drugs is due to start its operations next week, director of health care at the Ministry of Health Sulaiman Qube'in said Wednesday.

The committee, which groups representatives from key ministries, government departments and the private sector, is set to conduct field studies and research on the use of narcotics in order to combat drug addiction, Dr. Qube'in told the Jordan Times.

A number of sub-committees are affiliated to the committee and they group representatives from the Ministries of Health, Interior, Education, Information, Social Development, Youth and Finance in addition to the three universities in Jordan. The Amman-based Arab Anti-Narcotics Bureau and the private sector.

The Ministry of Health has been charged to issue directives and to organise the committee which was formed following a cabinet decision in January. Concerned authorities have continued to crack down on drug trafficking and recently JD 1 million worth of narcotics were incinerated at the kilns of the Jordanian Cement Factories.

Chairman outlines objectives of Arab pharmaceutical federation

AMMAN (Petra) — The objectives and programmes of the newly-established Federation of Arab Pharmaceutical Industries were expounded at a press conference held at the Professional Associations Complex in Amman on Wednesday.

Addressing the press conference, Mr. Nizar Jardaneh, the federation's chairman, said that the aim of the new federation will be to ensure the supply of medicines to the Arab World and to establish a pan-Arab market for Arab manufactured medicines and pharmaceutical products.

Pharmacists organise general conference for April 10

AMMAN (Petra) — A general pharmacists conference is to be held in Amman on April 10, according to an announcement made here Wednesday. The announcement was made by Ms. Laila Al Ma'ani, rapporteur of the scientific committee for the conference which is scheduled to last three days.

The participants will hear lectures by local and foreign pharmacists on different aspects of pharmacy as a profession and the role pharmacists play in serving their community as well as subjects connected with dealings and sales of medicines and drugs. Ms. Ma'ani said. She added that the participants will also discuss eight working papers on pharmacy.

Haj Hassan visits Karak

KARAK (Petra) — Minister of Labour and Social Development Khaled Al Haj Hassan has stressed the important role of social development in educating individuals so that they can contribute to national development. Speaking during a visit to Karak Governorate on Wednesday, the minister outlined the government's policy to grant government officials the authority to implement development projects on the basis of decentralisation in order to speed up the execution of these projects.

Mr. Haj Hassan said that the phosphate and potash projects, besides other large projects in the southern region, require the establishment of vocational training centres to train and qualify technical specialists to work in these major economic projects.

The minister earlier met with Karak Governor Salem Al Qudab who reviewed the projects in the governorate's five-year development plan with special reference to pilot projects included in the plan. Mr. Qudab stressed the importance of developing rural areas and involving the public in local councils' activities to increase production and to help needy families. Mr. Haj Hassan, accompanied by Mr. Qudab, also paid visit to the Karak labour and social development departments where he was briefed on the needs and activities of these departments.

Municipal conference ends with call for councils to be given more powers, higher revenues

By a Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — The general conference for municipal and local councils concluded its deliberations on Wednesday with resolutions in favour of giving more decision-making powers to elected councils and with a call for a reassessment of the current taxation policies and administration system.

The closing session of the four-day conference called for increasing the financial revenues of municipal councils through better collection and distribution networks and by rescheduling taxes and fees introduced by these councils. The conference called for increasing value added tax from two to three per cent. It also called for "reconsidering transportation fees and fines imposed for violations of municipal laws."

The resolutions also called for increasing the administrative efficiency of local councils through the establishment of a specialised regional training centre. The conference also pointed out the need to utilise the technical and scientific skills of Jordanians enlisted in the two-year military service.

In the field of laws and organisation, the conference recommended amendments to the current municipal law and the reassessment of regulations that govern local councils' and employees, including elected mayors and council members.

The conference called for facilitating more public participation in municipal activities and for expanding municipal functions by the implementation of a decentralisation policy.

Conferees also called for the establishment of a general union for councils which could coordinate work between the various municipal councils in the Kingdom.

Municipal council presidents authorised the minister of municipal and rural affairs to form a follow-up committee to see to the implementation of these resolutions and for the convening of an annual municipal council's conference.

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Marwan Hmoud, who chaired the meetings of the conference, delivered a speech at the closing session in which he said

hinery needed by municipal councils.

— The establishment of a clear basis to define the relationship between municipalities and the central electric power authority and other electric power companies.

— Revenues from taxes on petrol to be increased from 2.2 fils per litre to 5 fils, from 1.1 fils to 2.5 fils for kerosene and from no fees for diesel to 2.5 fils. The municipalities' share from vehicle licences to be increased from 40 to 50 per cent.

— The Ministry of Public Works should be responsible for municipal roads and financing the construction and maintenance of these roads.

— A reassessment of loan policies.

— The government to pay for lands needed for projects within the borders of the municipality.

— Tax on real estate to be collected by municipalities.

— Defining development projects within the Kingdom's five-year development plan and the role of municipalities in these projects.

— The cancellation of the text relating to the council president in the municipal law.

— The cancellation of the ban against electing the same council president for more than two terms.

— Defining the age of voters as 18.

— The council president to be elected directly by voters.

Foundation reviews plans for Jubilee School

AMMAN (Petra) — A meeting was held at Yarmouk University's Liaison Office on Wednesday to discuss the construction of the Jubilee School, a special project which was announced by Her Majesty Queen Noor in the course of the country's celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's 50th birthday last year. The school will be in recognition of the King's great efforts in promoting education in Jordan.

At the outset of the meeting, Mrs. In'am Al Mufri, director general of the Queen Noor Foundation which is supervising the project, presented a full report on the stages of the scheme and the

steps taken so far to implement the project. The aim of the meeting, she said, is to pave the way for carrying out the project and drawing up a full programme for the school's activities.

The meeting was attended by the director of North Carolina School for Mathematics and Science, Mr. Charles Eilber, who spoke about his school's system, administration, courses and other activities. The Jubilee School is to be established along the lines of the North Carolina school and it will offer training to promising students from various governorates.

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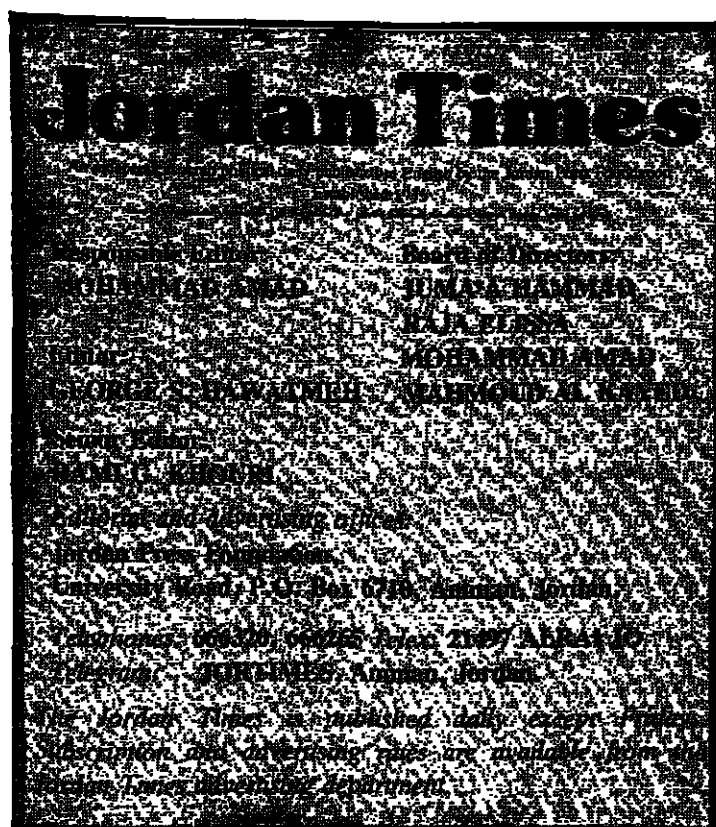
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VIEW FROM AMERICA

U.S. media: Less concern over Mideast conflict, joy over OPEC decline

SAN FRANCISCO — There is a curious new attitude towards the Middle East in the U.S. media. On the one hand, there is joy that oil prices are going down, that U.S. oil dependence on the Middle East is also way down, and that U.S. forces are not directly involved in Middle East troubles.

At the same time there are signs of worry. The Middle East is seen as unpredictable, and still strategically very important. Perhaps the sharpest worry now is over the course of the Iran-Iraq war. It now seems to the American media that Iran is slowly beginning to prevail over Iraq.

Perhaps the most significant indicator of this was a recent piece in the New York Times by a well-known journalist. His

conclusion was that despite their technological strength, the Iraqis could not match the fighting fanaticism of the Iranians.

True or not, there is a subtle sense in the American media that in the weeks and months to come, there might be a change in the war that could give the advantage to Iran. And if that happens, a surge of Islamic fundamentalism could pour forth from Iran over other areas of the Middle East.

I was surprised by the big headlines given the police riots in Egypt in our main San Francisco newspaper. But then news of Egypt vanished from the press. There were some references to the part fundamentalists may have played.

There also have been a few items about the Sudan. There the government of General Saeed el-Dahab has just sent a military delegation to Moscow. But friends of mine from the non-Islamic south tell me that a pro-Ethiopian movement down there is negotiating with the Mahdi party in order to explore the possibilities of joint political action. Also the Muslim Brotherhood is strong in the Sudan.

And the U.S. press is worried about occupied Palestine. The assassination of the mayor of Nablus was given big headlines in many U.S. newspapers. The press wishes that the Palestinian issue would vanish, but it knows that it will not.

And then there is another

kind of worry which I saw in a Hong Kong Chinese newspaper. There they worried that because of the rapidly declining price of oil and the dollar that Arab and Muslim countries might decide to shift all their dollar assets to other currencies. Peru in Latin America, interestingly, has already removed its deposits in U.S. banks out of the country.

I have seen few editorials on the Middle East. No one has any ideas as to what to do. There is hope that sooner or later the Soviets will let thousands of Soviet Jews emigrate to Israel. Maybe, it is felt, that will induce the Israeli government to make concessions on the Palestinian issue. But beyond that there are no ideas. In the end the big worry

about the Middle East relates to oil. And that is directly related to the Iran-Iraq war, and indirectly related to the Palestinian-Israeli issue. There is real worry about how fast oil prices and the dollar have declined in value. There is worry that instead of producing prosperity, oil and dollar which are excessively cheap could lead to another major economic crisis.

My own personal sense is that despite the usual bad news from the Middle East, there are quiet signs of hope. One sign of hope is that all the Arab countries gave support to Qadhafi when the U.S. decided to threaten him. Another sign is the quieting down of the Lebanese situation. Another is the rapprochement between Jordan

and Syria. Another is the easing of relations between the Sudan and Libya. If the Arab countries can come closer together as the situation in the land between the two rivers becomes more precarious, then that is a gain.

The Arab World expects little from the U.S. and such an attitude is correct. But despite the joy over the declining power of OPEC (and therefore Saudi Arabia), the United States knows that the Middle East remains one of the most vital regions in the world. And even if the talk from Washington seems to be shaped by Zionist concerns, underneath that talk is more of an awareness of realities than Middle Eastern people might think.

Municipalities take a step

A CONFERENCE on municipalities and rural councils which has just ended in Amman addressed itself to the chronic problems that have been impeding public services, and came up with recommendations reflecting the main concern and aspirations of village and townspeople alike.

The recommendations, which followed four days of deliberations, urged the government to introduce measures to enhance the concept of local administration and provide them with more decentralised powers, to re-examine existing taxation systems for local councils and modernise regulations and rules governing the council's activities and programmes as well as involving these councils in decision-making on all matters of their concern. The conference's call on the government to provide training for personnel employed by the councils, promote the work of councils that provide joint services and facilitate loans to the municipal and rural councils were perhaps among the other major recommendations and resolutions adopted.

The participants, who included mayors from major cities like Amman down to heads of small village councils, all complained about the shortage of funds for carrying proper services in their regions and they all attributed the shortage to the high cost of land required for their projects and whose price normally consumes the bulk of loans offered by financial institutions. The improvement of the taxation system for municipalities will also help the councils to raise sufficient funds for their schemes and initiate income-generating projects for their inhabitants. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who opened the conference on Saturday, referred to these issues and also stressed among other things the need for conducting a general survey to determine the number of families living in poverty prior to undertaking projects to increase their income and improve their lot. It goes without saying that for these councils to carry out a proper job, they should be provided with the essential elements mainly ample funds.

The conference, its deliberations and recommendations have indeed presented the government with a popular vote for enhancing the local administration rule. But though the recommendations look attractive, no one can deny that implementing them requires intensified efforts and a good deal of serious work and goodwill.

The government, which was involved in the conference from start to finish, did in fact voice approval of the recommendations and the minister of municipal and rural affairs and the environment promised that all resolutions will be implemented. But how far the government will or can go in honouring these promises is something that remains to be seen.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: Hopes, hopes

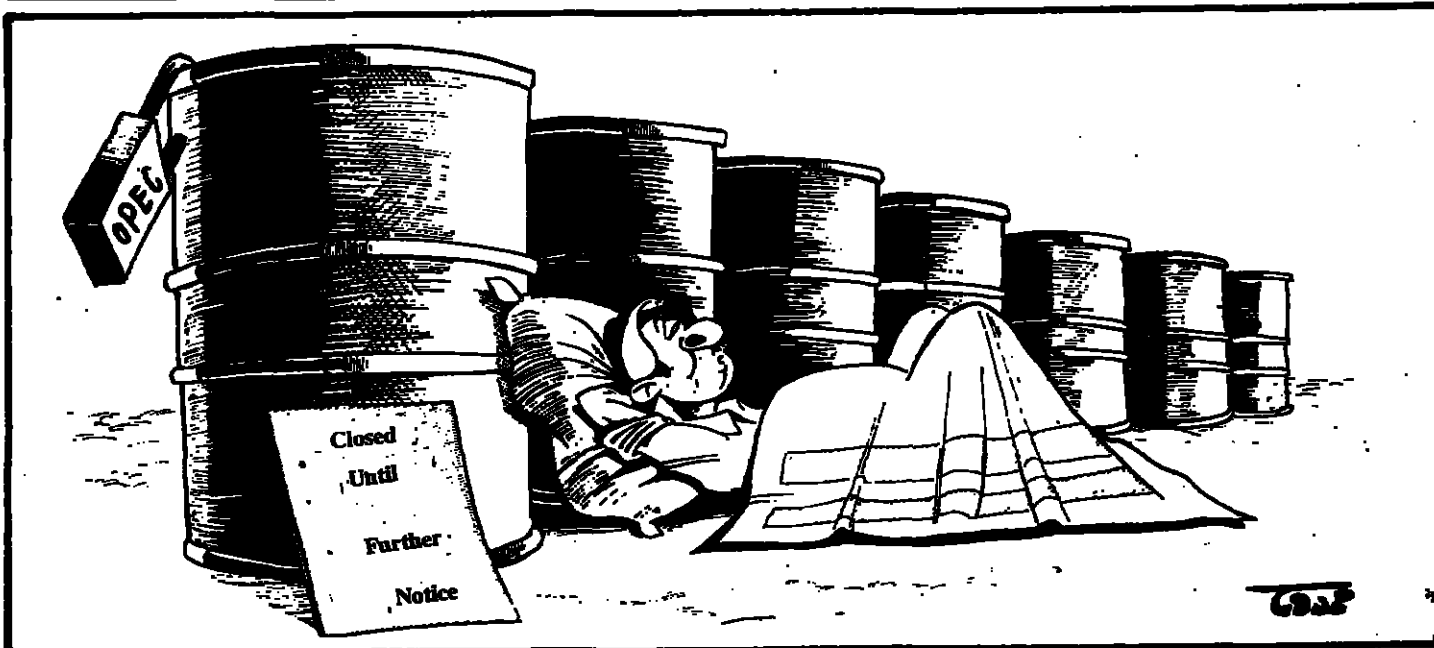
THE latest parliamentary elections in France have resulted in a victory for the right wing parties; the Gaullists and their allies. This victory reminds us of Charles de Gaulle, the French leader who had laid down the basis for strong relations between his country and the Arab World. The victory of the Gaullists rekindles hopes that the new government will renew the golden era that had prevailed in bilateral relations under de Gaulle, and the hope that French-Arab relations will be further strengthened for the benefit of both peoples. We still remember de Gaulle's independent and brave policies within the European Community and in international arenas. Perhaps the neo-Gaullists will make it their business now to find an independent course of policy, away from U.S. influences, particularly in matters connected with the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The United States had through its influence in Europe succeeded in curbing Europe's role in world politics, and Europe, as a result, appeared rather without real influence in the Middle East question and other world issues. The appointment of Jacques Chirac revives hopes that the French will now embark on independent policies and help us achieve justice.

Al Dustour: 'Peres' plan

ISRAELI Prime Minister Shimon Peres who attended the funeral of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme in Stockholm has been talking about a Marshall plan for the Middle East. The Marshall plan applied in Europe after the Second World War was successful because Europe was devastated and the assistance pouring into its nations were instrumental in re-building the cities and the industries again. Peres has been speaking at meetings in Sweden and calling for the implementation of a similar plan in the Middle East. He has been doing that in a bid to improve Israel's image in Europe and to make the world forget that the Middle East is still embroiled in conflict and that Palestinians are living under the yoke of occupation. This Marshall plan can be applied in our region only when occupation has ended and the Arab people in Palestine are no more subjected to oppression and arbitrary action by Zionists. Peres ought to have told the Europeans about the atrocities which his armed forces carry out against the Palestinian people and the seizure of Arab land and the eviction of the local population from their homeland.

Sawt Al Shaab: Enemy designs

WE are pained to see Syrian-Iraqi relations deteriorating at a time when we were expecting an improvement. But we know for sure that whoever planted the car bomb in Damascus last Thursday did that on purpose to undermine any attempts designed to bring about improvement in relations. The planting of the bomb could not have been made to serve Iraqi causes or any Arab country's interests. It was like a stabbing in the back, and a crime committed by criminals bent on perpetuating the weak Arab stand. The blast in Damascus that caused human loss was designed as a bid to cause further splits in Arab ranks, with the sole purpose of benefiting the Israeli enemy. The same criminals have been blowing up cars and killing people in Beirut, with a similar purpose and with the intention of perpetuating the civil war in Lebanon. If Arabs are to be reconciled and live in peace, their main target should be a complete annihilation of the criminals who lurk in the dark and who continue to strike against our national interests.



The Castro revolution at middle age

Cuba is changing: the sugar harvest has almost failed; home ownership is now possible; surplus goods fetch economic prices; people grumble at bureaucracy; and there is more free access to the dollar. And, the realization is that the welfare state is underpinned by Moscow rather than domestic resources. Robert Graham, recently in the island, reports.

IN CUBA, this is the time of the "zafra," the sugar harvest. Up and down the island every resource is being mobilised for what is still the country's principal economic activity: the production of sugar and its derivatives.

The zafra is normally followed closely in the press with reports, couched in language more suited to some arcane sports fixture. Rival teams of co-operatives vie to produce more and individuals toil to become celebrities by winning the accolade of "millionaire" for the amount of cane cut.

But this year, public discussion of the zafra is muted. Word has gone out that the harvest is little short of disastrous. A combination of drought and damage wrought by Hurricane Kate last autumn could reduce the original target of 8 million tons to below 7 million tons. This means that Cuba will almost certainly be unable to meet its commitments to supply the Soviet Union and other countries in the Comecon bloc.

In the past, this would have mattered little. Cuba has traditionally been viewed as the weak infant in the Comecon family, whose strategic position in the Caribbean on the doorstep of the U.S. automatically ensures Moscow's indulgence. But with the arrival of Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin and his new emphasis on economic efficiency, the clear directive to Dr. Fidel Castro is that Cuba's performance must improve. The message from Moscow, in short, is that international solidarity among socialist countries should not be taken to mean that some can live on a permanent soft subsidy.

These new pressures on Cuba come at a time when the economic battle has already superseded the earlier and more basic struggle to ensure the survival of the revolution against U.S. attempts at destabilisation. In the 26th year since the end of the Batista regime middle age has overtaken the Cuban revolution.

The larger-than-life figure of Fidel still strides the Cuban stage but he is mellower, less dogmatic. His flowing beard has thinned and turned grey and the trade mark cigar has gone. Since last August, he has given up smoking in public, and although he is remarkably fit in his 60th year, the strain of running Cuba for the past two and half decades has taken its toll. His mellower mood has even led him to muse on the attractions of liberation theology, while his political nose has led him to embrace the debt issue and to find new acceptance in Latin America.

The new relationship with Eastern bloc countries was underlined in February when Castro revealed at the third congress of the Cuban Communist Party that the country had been obliged to buy some 500,000 tons of sugar on the open market to make up the shortfall in its Comecon commitments.

But while the announcement

was greeted with loud applause the reality for those managing the Cuban economy is more sober.

This year's hard-currency earnings from free market sales of sugar, which Cuba originally hoped would be about U.S. \$230 million, could be nearly wiped out by the need to buy for Comecon. Although the more hard-nosed Soviet attitude has imposed strains, the effect is not nearly as severe as some analysts in Washington would pretend. More important is the way in which recent developments have highlighted the growing distortions and contradictions created by Cuba's dependence upon the Soviet Union and its allies.

Since the U.S. blockade of revolutionary Cuba, the Castroite experiment in socialism has been subsidised in four main ways: through the provision of oil supplies to make up for the country's energy shortage; through the purchase of sugar at a fixed price above the market rate, through soft trade credits and grants; and through military assistance.

Senior Cuban officials decline to comment on Western diplomatic assessments that East bloc assistance amounts to the equivalent of \$4 billion a year. Nevertheless they do admit that, especially during the past four years when other Latin American countries have seen the flow of aid and fresh money dry up, Cuba has not suffered in the same way — thanks to their Soviet allies.

Of particular importance have been the oil supplies and sugar purchases, the latter often at five to six times the market price. This has been a tremendous cushion against the effects of a slack sugar market which has so damaged other Caribbean economies. But it has equally encouraged the Cuban authorities to concentrate too much on sugar at a time when all other economies in the region have been seeking to lessen their vulnerability through diversification. The new five-year plan now being launched perpetuates the predominance of sugar, again through a high guaranteed price for the commodity.

Soviet energy supplies represent a more curious distortion. The Soviet Union is understood to supply approximately 10 million tons of crude and products a year. Any saving which Cuba can make either in the form of higher domestic oil production or rationalisation of energy use frees a part of this 10 million ton Soviet supply for hard-currency sales.

Last year, sales of this "surplus" crude were worth over \$600 million, according to officials at the National Bank of Cuba. Put another way, Cuban sales of surplus Soviet crude account for over half the island's hard-currency earnings. They have become the mainstay on which Cuba has relied to purchase Western goods and technology.

Not surprisingly, the slide in

international oil prices has been viewed with alarm in Havana since all its sales are spot. The combination of lost oil earnings with open market purchases of sugar for Comecon could mean at least a 25 per cent shortfall in expected hard-currency earnings this year. This is bound to put a strain on Cuba's ability to service its \$3.2 billion foreign debt with Western creditors which it has been punctilious in repaying until now. Furthermore, it will keep Cuba within a vicious circle: the country needs to diversify its trade and earn more hard-currency, but to do so it has to have access to Western credit.

The pressure may be eased within the next three years when the first of three Soviet-supplied nuclear power plants is due to come on stream. But Cuba's nuclear power programme is at least five years, perhaps seven, behind schedule. The same applies to plans to raise nickel production capacity from 40,000 tonnes to 100,000 tonnes a year. Comecon is investing some \$1.6 billion in this project, which is nearly five years behind schedule. Nickel is an important potential hard-currency earner, provided Cuba can produce efficiently and in large enough quantities.

For Cubans of all walks of life, Cuba without Fidel is unthinkable. That a committed Marxist in a state ruled by tightly-run Communist Party should feel free to indulge in theological discussions and talk freely about his Catholic upbringing underlines the extraordinary individuality of Cuba's leader and of Cuba itself in the context of Socialist countries.

Aware of his own mortality, however, Fidel has sought to prepare the succession. This was one of the main aims of the party congress which conferred the mantle of succession unequivocally on his younger and more introverted brother, Raul, aged 54. Raul's wife, Vilma Espin, a prominent figure in her own right as leader of the Cuban Women's Federation has joined the 14-person Politburo. So has Raul's deputy in the armed forces ministry, Abelardo Colon. By opting to keep the succession in the family, Fidel hopes to transfer his moral prestige with all the other advantages of trust.

Of equal significance has been the congress's decision to introduce new faces and younger blood into the higher echelons of the party. A third of the 146-strong central committee has been changed. Four of the old guard guerrilla commanders have been dropped from the powerful Politburo, including Ramiro Valdes, who lost his job as interior minister in December for being, among other things, too much of an old-school hardliner.

Cuban Socialism, a centrally planned economy according to the tenets of Marxism-Leninism, has become ever more of a tropical hybrid.

Cuba continues to be one of the most highly-mobilised societies in the world, starting with schoolchildren who join the Jose Marti pioneers (a politicised boy scout/girl guide equivalent) thr-

ough to neighbourhood defence committees (committees for the defence of the revolution). The CDRs incorporate 83 per cent of the population over 14, or some 6.5 million people. Beyond this is the vanguard of 532,639 in the Communist Party.

Such organisation reflects the regime's deep-felt insecurity. From an early age, Cubans are taught the need for permanent vigilance against the dirty tricks of the CIA and the exiles in Miami. The authorities are afraid to drop their guard, but the Sunday militia training sessions, where groups of men and women learn to strip AK-47 rifles or prepare booby traps, have a more informal air in the main city squares. The CDRs themselves are now more concerned with the organisation of vaccination programmes or the monitoring of local crime than denouncing counter-revolutionary neighbours.

Since Ramiro Valdes's departure from the interior ministry, the mood of relaxation has been palpable and there has been a slow but clear liberalisation in all aspects of Cuban life.

Even the notion of property has been turned on its head. In the past 12 months, Cubans have been able to purchase their own homes. Instead of paying rent, equivalent to 10 per cent of salaries, they can convert this into a "mortgage" — the difference being that they become responsible for repairs and enjoy rights of inheritance. So far 200,000 home ownership deeds have been handed out in a population of 10 million. As a result, an unofficial house market has grown up. The new economic plan proposes the construction of 180,000 private homes, the same number as the state is due to build. Another experiment is peasants' markets, where surplus goods produced by farmers are sold at street prices.

Such developments are now taken up and parodied in films and theatre. Cubans these days often surprise visitors by the candour of their complaints — the cumbersome system of ration cards, the labyrinthine bureaucracy that alienates citizens behind mountains of cheaply printed forms.

Fidel, Take this catchword of woes from his report to the Party Congress: "An inadequate and unstable supply of consumer goods, particularly clothing, footwear, home furniture and linen, as well as lack of variety, inappropriate sizes, poor finishing and outdated and repetitive designs, aggravated by irrational distribution." A visit to any shop or department store invariably reveals shoddy goods, limited choice and long queues.

Attempts to be more sensitive to consumer needs followed the exodus in 1980 of 120,000 Cubans disillusioned with the system. But the growth of disposable incomes has not been matched by supply. Those with access to dollars can buy in hard-currency shops but must have to put up with high prices on the free market (rationing covers just under a third of consumer goods). Meanwhile, the visitors live almost exclusively in a dollar economy. — Financial Times feature.

Swiss taste for isolation underlies U.N. rejection

By Peter Conrad
Reader

ZURICH — Swiss voters' decisive rejection of a government bid to join the United Nations illustrates their firm attachment to the splendid isolation under which Switzerland has prospered for decades, political commentators say.

Few were surprised that the conservative Swiss should use the weekend's national referendum to question the advantages of belatedly taking their place alongside the 159 other full members of the U.N. 40 years after the body's foundation.

Fear of compromising centuries-old neutrality coupled with the minimal material benefits of membership proved powerful arguments in a country long-noted for its sense of self preservation.

However, the overwhelming margin by which membership was rejected — three to one — provided a major shock for the government and surprised officials at the U.N.'s European headquarters, ironically situated in Geneva.

"The majority of Swiss continue to prefer to watch world politics from the balcony," commented the Zurich daily Tages Anzeiger, although it added that the decisive factor may have been quite simply: "What is in it for us?"

The referendum marked the first time in the U.N.'s history that a government had decided to let the people have the final say on membership.

Although economically and culturally aligned with Western Europe, Switzerland clings to a centuries old neutrality which has kept it out of both world wars. At the same time it has acquired a high-profile in international affairs, acting as mediator in various conflicts and hosting organisations and conferences aimed at sorting out the world's problems.

Switzerland is also an active member of almost all the U.N.'s subsidiary organisations, providing them with around 5100 million worth of aid a year. A Swiss national has recently been named U.N. high commissioner for refugees and another heads the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Commentators explain this apparent contradiction through a Swiss preference for practical action rather than debate coupled with a deep distrust of distant bureaucracies.

Pre-referendum polls, which sharply understated opposition to membership, showed most voters were worried about the implications for Swiss impartiality of having to join in U.N. organised sanctions.

Others simply wondered what they would get in return for the extra \$10.5 million a year full membership would cost.

The result showed the greatest opposition to membership over 80 per cent — in the conservative German-speaking cantons of central Switzerland.

With the votes counted, both sides say the decision should not be used as an excuse for change in the country's carefully-weighted foreign policy.

The People's Party, the only member of the four-way ruling coalition to oppose membership, said Switzerland should fight any temptation to retreat into its shell.

The director-general of the U.N. European office Eric Stry told Reuters he hoped "to continue to have excellent, cordial and privileged relations with our host country."

Foreign Minister Pierre Aubert, a Social Democrat and a driving force behind membership, made clear before the vote that he had no intention of resigning if it went against him.

The frequent use of referendum in Switzerland to decide, policy means politicians from the federal government down to the smallest local council are often forced to bow to the will of the people without any loss of face.

CENTRAL TENDERS
No. 37,38,39,40

Construction of the secondary schools/ The Sixth Education Project.

The contractors who had been qualified previously for the Sixth Education project and willing to participate in the following bids are requested to get bid documents from the project directorate, Ministry of Education from 15/3/1986 with the following conditions:-

1. The Sixth Education Project is partially financed by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Islamic Bank for Development, the secondary schools are divided into two groups and these tenders constitute the second group which is the last one.

2. Description of the announced tenders:- It includes the construction of the secondary schools at the following sites:-

No. 37/86 Marj Alhamam, Madaba, with an approximate area of 11290 m².

No. 38/86 Wadi Easer, Ain Albasha, Zay, with an approximate area of 11910 m².

No. 39/86 Almazar, Dier Abi Said, with an approximate area of 11360 m².

No. 40/86 Hibras, Ashjarah, with an approximate area of 9640 m².

3. Prices of the documents and tender bond for each tender as follow:-

Price	Tender Bond
JD 250	JD 25,000

4. Last date for receiving copy of tender is Saturday 26/4/1986.

5. Last date for submission offers is 12 O'clock Saturday 3/5/1986 at the Department of Government Directorate.

Chairman of the Central Committee.
Director of the Government Tendering Directorate.



40 YEARS: The liberal weekly newspaper "Die Zeit," published in Hamburg, Federal Republic of Germany, celebrated its 40th anniversary at the end of February. Here seen at the Hamburg Presshaus are (from the left): editor-in-chief Theo Sommer, co-proprietor Hilde von Lang, co-publisher Marion Grafen Donhoff and co-proprietor, co-publisher Helmut Schmidt, the former Federal Chancellor (Photo by DaD/dpa)

Panners, prospectors plumb for gold

By John Howard
The Associated Press

CHILI BAR, California — California's Sierra Nevada, where the 19th-century gold rush was born, is the scene of a new scramble as hunters find the precious metal in streams and canyons where it was exposed by recent storms.

"I know a man who's been prospecting 20 years, and he says he has found more in the past two weeks than all the time before," said one prospector, a 34-year-old Indiana carpenter, who would only speak if he was not identified. "The rains have washed it all down into the streams or behind rocks or into gullies."

By tradition, gold-hunters are discreet, like this prospector who said he would take a reporter to his Amador County site "only if you wear a blindfold when we go in."

Last month, northern California was lashed by nine days of storms that killed 13 people, injured 57, forced the evacuations of 50,000 residents and caused \$320 million in damages.

But there was a nugget of good news: the soggy ground and rain-swollen rivers churned up fresh deposits of gold-rich soil and rock.

"We've had more people in here than at any time since gold was more than \$800 an ounce (28 grammes)," said Paul Bailey, owner of a hardware store 45 miles east of Sacramento that caters to gold hunters. "I normally put in one or two orders per week (for equipment), now I'm putting in one every day." On March 14, gold sold for roughly \$348 per ounce in world markets.

While few panners were seen along the major rivers, numerous ribbons or pennants were tied to tree branches, signaling the areas had been claimed.

Several prospectors said the isolated, rugged canyons and steep streams have drawn an unusually large number of gold-seekers. Their numbers are expected to increase, particularly on weekends, as the weather warms and the mountains' deep snowpack melts.

"There's probably more gold here (in the mountains) than has ever been taken out," said Jim Kain of Chili Bar, a tiny community of mobile homes, a slate mine and a restaurant. Chili Bar itself, however, has little gold, because of a dam upstream on an American River fork.

The focus of the new gold rush — "We're calling it a gold rush because that's what it is," said Camino prospector Sterling Fle-

ischer — is the 200-mile long western slope of the Sierra Nevada between Sonora and Downville, a region crisscrossed by swift rivers. The towns dot north-south state route 49, a winding, narrow highway through rustic communities like Jamestown, Angels Camp, Sutter Creek, Placerville, Pilot Hill, Auburn, Grass Valley and Nevada City.

The locals call the area "gold country." It includes the most famous gold town of all, Coloma, where James Marshall hit pay dirt 137 years ago at John Sutter's mill on the American River. His find launched the California gold rush.

Today's prospectors have discovered gold-rich soil sticking to the roots of felled trees. Others have found the metal in rivers where roads have been washed away or mudslides have occurred. The heavy metal weighs more than the sand or debris around it. Pouring water over the soil, known as panning, removes the silt but leaves the gold.

"Panning is really kind of an art, but you just learn to pick it up," Bailey said, as he swished water with a quick wrist action over deep black sand and sparkling yellow gold. Pans, made of metal, which remove silt, abound, but veteran hunters use powerful underwater vacuums with gasoline engines, that suck silt into sieves, allowing the operator to check for gold.

Downville, a rugged mountain town off the tourist track, is a popular region for hunters who use these dredgers. Eddy, a Sacramento mailman who wouldn't give his full name, has a Downville-area claim which he dredges regularly. He said he finds 2.5 to 3 ounces (70 to 84 grammes) of gold "during a good weekend." "But it's a lot of work. You have to hike in a long way to get to the claim."

On weekend nights, prospectors gather in the St. Charles Hotel in Downville, playing poker and swapping stories of their luck. Eddy said. Prospectors sell their gold to local buyers, banks and stores, or use it as currency. In isolated areas, filling stations and cafes often have scales in their windows, an announcement that gold is purchased or accepted as money.

Buyers pay finders "70 per cent of the cost of gold on the New York Stock Exchange at noon on the day that day," Bailey said. "They'll pay up to 75 per cent if the gold is in large nuggets."

The gold in large is generally sold to jewellers or major gold dealers, he said.

Compaq defies the computer analysts

Louise Kehoe explains how Compaq, the U.S. computer company, developed rapidly by making a virtue of being IBM-compatible and beat the giant out of the portable personal computer market.

SAN FRANCISCO — In February 1982, three engineers huddled in a Houston pie shop, poring over ideas for a new personal computer company. They sketched out on the back of a placemat plans for what would become the Compaq portable computer.

Four years later, Compaq introduced its second generation IBM-compatible portable personal computer, an event which followed on the heels of the announcement that sales had reached \$500 million in 1985, making it the fastest growing computer company in the world.

Joseph (Rod) Canion, 41, a native of Houston, Jim Harris, 42, of Three-Rivers, Texas, and Bill Murto, 40, an "army brat" educated in Texas, all former Texas Instruments engineers, founded Compaq with the goal of becoming "one of the top five" makers of personal computers. Already it is number two behind the computer giant IBM.

Compaq's success has defied the predictions of computer industry analysts. Making "clones" of IBM computers has proved to be a short cut to disaster for most companies that have tried it, but Compaq's approach has been unique and the confidence of its founders, steadfast, despite the critics.

Compaq is not a "clone maker," insists Rod Canion, the company's president. "We don't use that word around here," adds a company executive firmly. Instead, as Compaq puts it, its products conform to the business personal computer market standard established by IBM.

So, rather than fighting to establish its own software standards like Apple Computer, Compaq fell into line with IBM making fully compatible machines that can run programmes designed for IBM PCs. With each of its products, however, Compaq has added something lacking in IBM's PCs.

Compaq made its name by introducing, early in 1983, the first portable IBM-compatible personal computer. Although IBM later announced its own portable, Compaq still dominates this market sector and IBM is said to have stopped manufacturing its portable PC altogether, although IBM

declines to comment.

Beating IBM out of any sector of the computer market is enough to impress most computer industry watchers, but Compaq's achievements are broader. Much of the company's success is attributed to its command of the computer retail distribution channel.

Unlike most personal computer companies, Compaq sells only through computer retail dealers. "We do not compete with our dealers by selling direct to large corporations," explains John Gribi, chief financial officer. This, together with Compaq's generous dealer margins, has cemented a "real close relationship" between Compaq and its 1,900 U.S. dealers.

Canion says that, according to private research, 58 per cent of Fortune 1000 companies say that computer dealers are their primary sources of supply for personal computers, up from 49 per cent a year ago. Business customers apparently want to create systems with peripherals and add-ons from different manufacturers without having to shop around. Individual manufacturers cannot match the low overhead, high quality sales and support of the dealers, Canion maintains.

Compaq's phenomenal growth — the company reported \$111 million in sales in its first full year of operations, an American business record, and second-year sales of \$329 million — is simply the result of "doing things right," according to Canion. "We didn't go after a hundred million dollars or five hundred million dollars. We went after the basics — the distribution channel and the right product position."

On-the-job experience taught Canion two important lessons, he recalls: "On the positive side, the need for controls — the need to know the facts and numbers. And on the other hand, seeing the inefficiencies that big companies can unfortunately put on their key employees, was very impressive training in what not to do."

Both lessons have been incorporated in Compaq's culture. From day one, Compaq was a "large company in the formative stages," says John Gribi. Compaq started life, for example, with a

computer system fit for a billion dollar company. "We knew that if we were going to grow quickly we needed systems that would last without having to make changes. We were committed to a very sophisticated and total package of information systems from the beginning," says Gribi.

"At the heart of being able to grow as we have, without completely losing your mind, is to have the systems in place," echoes Canion. The computers and people that provide top management with information on a day-by-day basis are vital, Canion believes. "When I see a company that is getting into trouble, I know in my heart that the guy is making the decisions the best he could, but he didn't have the facts. If you don't have the facts you are guessing to a high degree — it's too risky."

Cutting out the "guesswork" of business decisions does not imply rigidity. "We have a financial plan in mind, but we don't run the company to a certain revenue target or any specific number target. We plan what we think will happen, but it's always wrong," says Canion.

Compaq's goal is to grow somewhat faster than the personal computer market. So far, as Canion expects, the market grows by 20-25 per cent next year, Compaq should be able to grow by around 30 per cent, he projects. But if the market should grow at a much slower rate, "that is OK too," he maintains.

Keeping control of rapid growth no longer worries Canion. "We will never again see the rate of growth that we experienced in 1983," he points out. Within 12 months, Compaq grew from 100 people to over 600; from making 200 units per month in January to 10,000 in the month of December, from zero sales to \$111 million for the year.

"Because of the way we did it, we ended the year stronger than when we began," Canion claims. Having an experienced management team in place from the start was a critical aspect of Compaq's business plan. "The management team was relatively mature," points out Gribi. "We knew what to watch for."

Team work is vital to Compaq, all of its managers believe. "One of the basic elements we look for in people is their ability to work as a team player. We will avoid the

best person in the world if, because he or she is eccentric or for some other reason, they cannot work as part of a team," Canion stresses. "I'm sure that we could not have come this far this fast if we didn't have a team that was working as well as we are together."

Compaq was unusually fortunate in its ability to raise funds to put people and resources in place before its business could support them. The company received \$30 million in venture capital in 1982, from investors led by Sevin Rosen Management.

"We knew that we could not be cash constrained," says Gribi. "We had to have cash. One of the hallmarks of start-up failures is that they are under-capitalised."

Another essential ingredient in Compaq's "recipe for success" has been the very personal computer the company is making. "We rely 80 per cent upon our main computer systems for information and 20 per cent upon personal computers," says Gribi.

"The personal computer puts so much power on an individual's desk. He can turn information around so quickly."

"You cannot wait for the facts, you go find them — get them together with the right people and reach a decision," says Canion.

Over the next few months, Compaq will face some of the most critical decisions in the company's history. "Our next challenge is to expand in some way beyond the portable and desktop business market," Canion explains. The wrong move, he admits, could be disastrous.

Canion is not giving away too much about Compaq's future directions. He acknowledges, however, that his team is mulling the possibility of moving downmarket, into the under \$1,000 personal computer sector.

In the meantime, Compaq's new product is designed to reassert the company's leadership in the portable computer market. The Compaq portable II is smaller, lighter and more powerful than the original.

"The Compaq idea was not one of the century's all-time greats," L. J. Sevin, one of Compaq's principal venture backers, is said to have remarked, "but the way those guys executed it was spectacular." — Financial Times news feature.

Compact discs to play more than music

By Catherine Frost
Reuters

BOSTON — Compact discs have become a smash hit for the music industry in only three years. Now the personal computer industry is hoping it will be just as successful in using the same discs to store data.

The first discs for computers were introduced last year with the capacity to store 550 million characters of data. That is 1,500 times the capacity of the floppy discs used by most personal computers for storage or enough to record the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica with room left over.

But efforts to transfer the technology to computers have run up against a problem unheard of in the stereo business — there is no standard format for compact discs used with computers, whereas any music disc can be used on any player that works with any stereo system.

Analysts said the lack of standards is currently the largest impediment to sales of compact discs for computers.

The current state of the market is often compared with the early days of videocassette recorders, when companies promoting two competing standards, VHS and Beta, confused the consumer and delayed the growth of the entire market.

To avoid the same confusion

with compact discs and speed up acceptance of the product, a group of computer companies led by software publisher Microsoft have joined together to develop a standard format.

"Our goal is to create an implementable format by the end of the first quarter of 1986," said William Zoellick, manager of software research for TMS, a member of the group.

Other members of the group, which has dubbed itself High Sierra, include digital equipment and reference technology.

Microsoft, developer of the MS-DOS operating system used by all IBM and IBM-compatible personal computers, is the driving force behind the effort to make all compact discs interchangeable between different computers and players and is rapidly increasing its own commitment to the technology.

In January, Microsoft acquired Cyation, a developer of compact disc software, and is currently hosting a compact disc conference in Seattle. Thomas Lopez, vice president of Microsoft's newly-created compact disc division, said the company will make some major announcements at the conference.

If Microsoft's efforts to promote standardisation are successful, market researcher Disk/Trend predicts that worldwide sales for computer uses will in-

crease from a minuscule 3,000 players in 1985 to 353,000 by 1988.

Disk/Trend expects James Porter said he expects five to 10 per cent of all personal computers will have compact disc drives in five years but added, "standardisation is very important. Clearly there must be one common set of software if the market is to develop."

Most manufacturers of compact discs still expect almost all of the demand to come from the music industry for several years to come.

The success of the discs, first introduced by joint developers Sony and Philips in 1983, has already exceeded all expectations. Sales of the music players reached one million units in 1985 and are expected to double again this year.

The 4.7-inch (17.5 cm) aluminium discs contain digital code which is read by a laser in the player. Any kind of information can be encoded on disc — music, data or images.

Compact discs used with computers are known as CD-ROM — compact disc read-only memory — because they are pre-recorded and can be read only by the computer. They are not erasable and no new information can be added by the user.

Currently, CD-ROM are used strictly to store data bases. For example, Grolier Electronic Publishing offers its academic Ame-

rican Encyclopedia on a disc for use on a Philips player and IBM personal computer.

There are still some technical glitches which must be worked out before compact discs are ideal for computers. At present, the slightest imperfection on the disc can cause the laser to misread the encoding — a flaw that is tolerable in music but very noticeable with data.

But software publishers are hopeful that, once standards are worked out, the types of applications available will mushroom.

Randa Habib's

Work rules' that work

ALTHOUGH the situation of employees in Jordan is really in bad shape, it did not reach yet the stage of employers asking their workers to give "at least two weeks notice" before they pass away! But what is really happening is that workers, as I previously said, feeling insecure in their jobs, have pinned up those famous "work rules". Of course it is a joke, a joke that allows those employees to let out the steam.

I am regularly contacted by company employees who tell of their problems. Unfortunately there is very little I can do.

I was told about a secretary who was asked by her employer to resign when he learned that she was pregnant. The company felt that three weeks of maternity leave were bound to reduce her work. And even more, in these days of unemployment, two unmarried, less experienced secretaries that were appointed for the salary of one. But, you will agree with me that a married secretary needs her job even more after she gets a baby. Why then force her out? Is this fair? This situation has, unfortunately, become common these days.

It is no secret that the private sector is passing through difficult times which force some companies to reduce the number of their employees. Others are not able to pay workers' salaries on time. Well, these things happen, the whole region is being affected by economic crises.

But what is unforgivable is that some employers kick people out of their jobs with no valid reason, just because they feel they can find in the "market" others who would do the same kind of work for a lower salary, people being desperate to get a job, any job. Something should be done to prevent similar injustices. Cynical "work rules" hanging on office doors are unfortunately not enough.

Australia's young give government headache

By Francis Daniel
Reuters

SYDNEY — Australia's youngsters, many without work and into drugs and crime, are giving the government its biggest headache.

Prime Minister Bob Hawke says that years of neglect have left Australian youth with a sense of isolation and powerlessness.

He has ordered his Labour Party government to tackle the youth problem as "priority number one" before it gets out of hand.

Hawke rates the task so highly that a special telephone link has been set up so young people can contact him directly about their difficulties or at least be sure their messages are passed on to him.

But officials closely involved in the first government scheme specifically aimed at helping young people told Reuters there were no quick-fix solutions and said the process would be slow and arduous.

They blame the country's education system for not equipping young Australians to enter a job market where emphasis has shifted to advanced technology.

"Our education system has been old fashioned and unable to cope with important structural changes in the economy, the labour market and society in the past decade," said a senior official.

According to the latest official statistics there are 2.6 million people between the ages of 15 and 24 in Australia's total population of 15 million.

More than 200,000 young men and women are out of work, about 20 per cent of the total jobless number, and are dependent on social welfare benefits or dole handouts.

Officials are worried that many of them are so used to living on the dole that they may never want to work.

At present a young unemployed person receives about 50 Australian dollars (\$35) a week. Hawke wants to offer an equal amount in free educational allowances to remove the attraction of the dole.

A group of top businessmen has said an urban guerrilla movement could emerge among disillusioned youth.

The government dismissed the warning as an exaggeration but officials admitted that it reflected the seriousness of the problem and the urgent need to find a cure.

Drug addiction and crime among young people has been increasing.

"Too many young people are inadequately housed, too many receive inadequate health care, the welfare needs of too many are not being addressed and there are too many alcohol- and drug-related deaths among young people," Hawke told parliament.

One of the key elements of his scheme is a mixture of vocational and on-the-job training for at least 75,000 young people in the next 10 years.

But officials said the programme was already lagging far behind and was not expected to reach the initial target of 10,000 trainees for this year.

Hawke has promised not to give up and has been drumming up support for the project over television and radio.

The special telephone link — known as "Bob Hawke's priority one number" — has been set up so that young people can contact the prime minister when he visits radio stations around country.

Book of proverbs — don't judge it by its cover

By Robert Basler

NEW YORK — When times are tough and the road is long, it helps to remember what the Armenians say: "The watermelon will not ripen in your armpit."

Or, as the Romanians sagely warn: "He who mixes up with brans is eaten by pigs." And speaking of brans, never forget the Vietnamese saying, "What is true of the buffalo's bowels is true of the cow's bowels."

Wolfgang Mieder, a German-born folklorist and professor, mindful of the Yoruba saying "a proverb is the horse of conversation," has compiled a thundering herd of 18,500.

"The Encyclopaedia of World Proverbs" is billed as the largest compilation of its kind, offering nearly 600 pages of wisdom.

Mieder, head of the German and Russian language department at the University of Vermont in Burlington, has been collecting proverbs for 15 years and spent two years putting together his latest effort, published by Prentice-Hall.

Contrary to a common notion that proverbs must be ancient, Mieder says new ones are being coined every year. He cites "different strokes for different folks" as a recent American addition to the genre.

Nor does the identity of the author need to have been lost, although that is often the case.

"You may have a phrase that hundreds use, but only a few know it comes from Shakespeare," Mieder points out.

He says defining a proverb is no simple matter. As his own working definition he used "a concise statement of an apparent truth which has or has had some currency."

Some proverbs are harder to translate and appreciate than others. The Russian saying "You cannot sew buttons on your neighbour's mouth" is clear enough.

But it takes a minute to grasp what the Dutch mean when they say: "Roast geese don't come flying into your mouth."

The book contains advice that has evolved from all professions and cultures. There is a Yiddish saying: "You can't grow corn on

the ceiling." The Armenians remark: "You don't soak lentils in your mouth," and the Maltese offer: "Medicine is not roast beef."

Lawyers are singled out. The Germans say: "Lawyers are bad Christians," while many other cultures say even worse things about them.

Mexicans urge us to avoid partial solutions with: "The best way to put an end to the bugs is to set fire to the bed."

Former leaders may find food for thought among such proverbs as "Loyalty is more valuable than diamonds" — appropriately enough from the Philippines.

Variations on a single theme are found in several parts of the world. Yiddish-speakers offer: "One rotten apple spoils the other." The Maltese say the same about oranges, the Japanese about peaches, and one African tribe says it about nuts.

Similarly, while the English say: "You may take a horse to the water but you can't make him drink," the Danish know the same thing about oxen and the Dutch

about donkeys.

The French tell us: "The hunchback does not see his own hump, but he sees his brother's," while across the Mediterranean the Moroccans say precisely the same thing about the camel.

The Russians say: "Moscow wasn't built in an instant," and the French: "Paris was not built in a day," but the English version of this proverb names Rome, not London.

Predictably, almost every culture has much to say about money. "Money is a master everywhere," say the Czechoslovaks, and the Maltese say: "Money is a mattress of thorns."

According to the Romanians: "With money one can even buy rabbit cheese."

At times, two cultures can put a different spin on the same subject. "Better late than never," the English tell us, while the Germans say "a little too late is much too late."

Mieder's collection shows nearly as much sexism as wisdom. "Satisfy a dog with a bone and a woman with a lie," the Basques counsel, while the Estonians say:

"A woman has long hair and short brain" and the Japanese: "A woman's wisdom is monkey wisdom."

"Proverbs without any doubt are misogynous," Mieder acknowledges, comparing them to legends, fairy tales and other male-dominated bits of lore.

Mieder says some proverbs are almost as old as language. Such sayings as "One hand washes the other" are ancient, and he has written a 60-page paper tracing "Big fish eat little fish," back to the eighth century B.C.

Mieder believes all cultures are rich in proverbs, although some of these treasures have been mined more thoroughly than others. Finland, he says, has more than one million proverbs.

Mieder said he could have written 20 times as much but his publisher said the book was long enough.

As the Lebanese say, "Not every long thing is a banana, nor every round thing a walnut." Or, as the Japanese like to say, "A dipper can't be used for an earpick."

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Bruno clears path to world title challenge

LONDON (AP) — Frank Bruno, Britain's exciting heavyweight who hopes to fight for the world title later this year, relinquished his European boxing crown Wednesday rather than be forced into a mandatory defence against an unranked opponent.

Bruno, who won the title when he knocked out Sweden's Anders Eklund in four rounds last October, had been ordered by the European Boxing Union to defend his title against Andre Van Den Oetelaar of The Netherlands. Under European rules, the match had to take place within six months of the Eklund fight — meaning an April deadline.

Bruno's manager, Terry Lawless, and the British Boxing Board of Control objected to the nomination of Oetelaar, claiming a mis-match.

With time running out, Lawless informed the European union through the British Boxing Board that Bruno had vacated the title rather than meet an opponent who, on paper, is several classes weaker.

Had the bout taken place, it would almost certainly have been in Holland because no British

promoter would have wanted to stage a financially unattractive championship bout.

Although he was overjoyed when he won the European crown, Bruno now has his sights set on a tilt at the world heavyweight title, an ambition that might have been wrecked had he lost against Van Den Oetelaar.

The EBU immediately found a

USOC announces that it opposes 'open Olympics'

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado (AP) — The United States Olympic Committee announced Tuesday that it does not support an "open" Olympic Games featuring top professional competitors.

It said, however, that it strongly

replacement for the Dutchman in Denmark's Steffen Tangstad.

On March 4, Bruno knocked out South Africa's Gerrie Coetzee at London's Wembley Arena to become the World Boxing Association's official no. 1 contender.

He could get his world title chance later this year against either Tony Tubbs or Tim Witherspoon, who are expected to fight this summer in a rematch of their January showdown.

Witherspoon won that fight on points and took the title from Tubbs but officials ordered a rematch after a dope test on the new champion proved positive.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Hadlee leads N.Zealand over Australia

DUNEDIN, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand defeated Australia on Wednesday by 29 runs in the first of a series of four one-day internationals at Carisbrook. Replying to New Zealand's score of 186 for six in its allotted 50 overs, the visitors could muster only 157 before being dismissed in the 47th over. Richard Hadlee was the chief destroyer for New Zealand, claiming four for 15 in 9.5 overs, while part-time medium-pacer Martin Crowe returned an economical two for 23 off 10 overs. Faced with an accurate New Zealand attack and a slowish outfield, the Australians lost wickets regularly and were never on course to win.

UAE heads for Bahrain and Gulf tourney

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) national soccer team left for Bahrain Wednesday to play in next week's Gulf Championship, buoyed by a strong showing in a test encounter Tuesday with Yugoslavia's Partisan. Brazilian coach Carlos Alberto called the match, in which the two teams drew 1-1, "good training" before the Gulf Championship begins on Saturday. "What it showed is that we have the basic reserves, which is an important thing for any team," he told local newspapers.

Two more suspended in Hong Kong scandal

HONG KONG (AP) — The Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club suspended the licences of an Australian jockey and an Australian trainer Wednesday until next month. The action came one day after Hong Kong's chief anti-corruption agency arrested three more people for suspected horse-racing malpractices. The Jockey Club did not give the reasons for the suspensions of Jockey Ian Albino and trainer Roy Edwards.

Fans may give Egypt the edge

By Hamza Hendawi

CAIRO — Egypt, riding high after topping World Cup finalists Morocco, will hope to maintain their winning record over Cameroon when they meet the West African holders in the African Nations' Cup final on Friday (kick-off 1500 Jordan local time).

The hosts, who made a dismal start to the eight-nation tournament, will be spurred on by an expected capacity crowd at the 100,000-seat Cairo International Stadium, where they ousted Morocco 1-0 in the semi-finals on Monday.

Their triumph over the more fancied Moroccans must have been extra sweet for the Egyptians, who crashed out from the race for Mexico eight months ago at the hands of the North Africans.

Thousands of local fans took to the streets in jubilant scenes to

celebrate the win and in Alexandria, where Cameroon beat Ivory Coast 1-0 to reach the final, hundreds danced and sang outside the luxury hotel where Cameroon had set up camp.

Egypt, who last won the title in 1959, may also have some comfort in recalling recent successes over classy Cameroon.

They beat them 2-0 and 2-1 in Cairo when they last met a year ago in warm-up matches to prepare for World Cup qualifying rounds. They also outclassed them with a 2-0 win in the last African Cup finals two years ago in Ivory Coast.

But the Egyptians, who went down 0-1 to Senegal in the opening match of the championship, will be ill-advised to be complacent.

Unbeaten so far in this tournament with eight goals to their credit, Cameroon have displayed

a cohesive blend of courageous young talent guided by older and more experienced players.

They have also established a reputation for their resilience to strike back and their attractive attacking football.

Seasoned by European-based professionals, they settled the issue against the Ivorians with a 46th minute goal thanks to yet another display of lethal opportunism by Roger Milla of St. Etienne, who scored half of the Cameroonian goals.

The 33-year-old striker should be the key man on Friday and Egypt will certainly assign a man to shadow him as they successfully did on Monday with Morocco's Swiss exile Aziz Bouderbala and Merry Kirmou of French club side Le Havre.

If it works, Milla will have to dip into the depth of his talent to put fellow strikers Ernest Ebongue, and Paul Louis Mfide in the clear against a formidable Egyptian defence.

"I respect every side in the world, but I fear none," said coach Claude Le Roy when asked about the advantage the home side may have by playing at home.

"But my problem has always been that my players never hit peak form until 20 to 30 minutes into the match," Le Roy, who has been coaching Cameroon for nearly a year, told Reuters.

He said star striker Teophile Abega, injured in their opening match on March 8, was doubtful for the Friday encounter.

The Egyptians, meanwhile, will be looking to striker Taher Abu Zeid, whose blazing drives gave the hosts three of their five goals so far in the tournament, to spearhead their attack.

Managed by former Wales boss Mike Smith, Egypt are still to see a more effective form from striker Mahmoud Al Khateib, who has so far failed to match his fame as their best player.

Without a single goal to his credit, the 32-year-old Khateib has been eclipsed by Zeid, who now appears poised to take over his label as the country's most admired player.

Already gone are the crowd's customary chants of "Bibo", Khateib's nickname, and the name Abu Zeid is fast becoming the magic word for the avid fans.

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Cinema
OPERA
Abdel, behind Alia offices

HOLLYWOOD HOT TUBS
(Colour)

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30

Yen's appreciation creates dilemma in Japan

TOKYO (R) — Japan has bowed to domestic political pressure and risked the wrath of the United States by acting to stop the yen's rapid rise against the dollar.

Bankers and foreign exchange dealers said Wednesday that Tokyo took the unexpected step of intervening in the New York foreign exchange market Tuesday, night to buy dollars in order to spare its exporters a further battering.

Although Bank of Japan Governor Satoshi Sumita refused to confirm the intervention, currency speculators in Tokyo were convinced and scrambled to buy back dollars they had sold last week.

pushing the U.S. currency up sharply to 176.80 yen at the close of trading, from 174.90 Tuesday.

Bank of Tokyo Chairman Yutaka Kashiwagi said Japan could not tolerate a yen stronger than 180 to the dollar. The government was facing increasing pressures in parliament to calm the currency market and had to act.

Dealers said, however, that by acting to appease domestic interests, Japan was running the danger of angering Washington, which is counting on a weaker dollar to make American industry more competitive.

Last September, Japan agreed with the United States on the need

to strengthen the yen and acted aggressively to bring this about, including boosting its interest rates to enhance the attractiveness of holding the Japanese currency.

The yen has risen further and faster than Japan expected, leaping nearly 30 per cent over the last six months to a record 174.30 against the dollar in New York Tuesday. The speed and level has crippled small Japanese exporters by forcing them to raise prices and lose U.S. sales.

"It's causing them genuine anguish," one diplomat said. Mr. Kashiwagi said the yen had risen to a point where government expressions of good intent were no longer enough.

With polls for parliament's upper house scheduled for July, the government appears to have decided to place domestic political considerations before foreign concern, diplomats said.

They said the Japanese move probably would trigger calls in the United States for laws to protect U.S. industry from Japanese imports, especially in the run-up to congressional elections in November.

Japan believes it has one powerful friend in Mr. Paul Volcker, head of the U.S. central bank, who has warned that too rapid a dollar fall would push up prices in the United States and undermine international confidence in the dollar.

Lawson pleases British financial institutions

LONDON (R) — The Bank of England led a cut in British interest rates Wednesday as financial institutions responded favourably to an optimistic budget statement Tuesday by Chancellor of the Exchequer Nigel Lawson.

An announcement by the Bank of England, the central bank, that it was trimming its money market rates by one per cent was swiftly matched by Barclays, the biggest of Britain's big four clearing banks, which said it was cutting its base rate from 12.5 per cent to 11.5 per cent.

Britain's already high interest rates rose one per cent in January as sterling faltered under pressure from rapidly falling world oil prices.

With Britain a major oil producer, sterling is vulnerable as an oil currency. But despite doubts over the future level of oil prices, sterling firmed slightly following the budget statement.

Mr. Lawson's predictions Tuesday that inflation could be down by two per cent to 3.5 per cent by the end of the year, and that growth could top three per cent, pleased British financial institutions.

Mr. Lawson gave the British a modest tax cut and a promise of more to come, along with the prediction of a flourishing economy

this year, based on cheaper oil. Delivering his third annual budget to the House of Commons, Mr. Lawson brushed aside the fact that the oil price collapse had wiped more than £5 billion (\$7.25 billion) off his estimated North Sea revenues for the 1986-87 financial year beginning on April 6.

Instead, he gave the optimistic assessment that "with output forecast to rise at three per cent and inflation to fall to three-and-a-half per cent, 1986 is set to register our best overall performance for a generation."

He warned Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil ministers meeting in emergency session in Geneva that Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's government had no intention of cutting North Sea production to help bolster the oil price, almost halved since the turn of the year.

He said it was not in Britain's national interest to keep oil prices high.

Mr. Lawson admitted that the oil price drop prevented him fulfilling a promise made a year ago to cut taxes by £3.5 billion (\$5 billion).

But he still managed to find just under £1 billion (\$1.47 billion) for tax cuts, including the first cut in the standard rate of income tax for

seven years, from 30 per cent to 29 per cent.

He said his long-term aim was still to reduce standard rate income tax to no more than 25 per cent.

Mr. Lawson's 75-minute budget statement was greeted by cheers from the ruling Conservative benches but was criticised by opposition leaders who said it failed to tackle the problem of record unemployment.

Labour opposition leader, Mr. Neil Kinnock said: "This year's budget was to have been a bribe budget of tax cuts towards the next election. Instead of that the falling oil prices and oil revenue has made it into a bits and pieces budget."

Mr. Lawson's budget calculations are based on an average oil price this year of \$15 a barrel. The package could come unstuck if an OPEC failure to reach agreement on marketing strategy causes a further collapse.

He pleased financial institutions by announcing that public borrowing would be set at £7 billion (\$10 billion), £1 billion less than anticipated. The borrowing target represented 1.75 per cent of gross domestic product, down one-quarter of a percentage point.

Overall public spending for 1986-87 is estimated at £139 billion (\$200 billion), a figure set by Mr. Lawson last year.

The reduction in income tax cost Mr. Lawson £900 million (\$1.3 billion). Analysts have predicted he should have £4 billion (\$5.8 billion) to give away next year, which would allow him to fulfil his promise of a 25 per cent standard rate.

Next year's budget will possibly be the last before the general election that must be held by the spring of 1988 and the Thatcher government would hope to put together a giveaway package.

Mr. Lawson clawed back some of his lost oil revenue by increasing petrol tax by 7.5 pence (10 cents) a gallon but recommended that oil companies should not pass this cost on to the consumer.

He increased cigarette prices by 11 pence (16 cents), almost twice the current 5.5 per cent rate of inflation. But he left duties untouched on alcohol, including Scotch whisky which is suffering a slump.

The revenue changes brought Mr. Lawson £795 million (\$1.1 billion). He introduced a number of measures to encourage wider share ownership and help the unemployed, including a counselling scheme to help the long-term jobless find work.

Lower oil prices worsens U.S. unemployment

NEW YORK (OPECNA) — Thousands of people are losing their jobs in the United States as oil companies eliminate exploration and production projects due to falling crude prices.

Industry observers here said the decline in oil-related activities would drag down other business, especially in the country's oil-dependent states.

According to a report by the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), Mr. Ralph Perlman, Louisiana's budget director, said less oil drilling would mean fewer orders for drilling parts, fewer barges to carry them and a reduction in the workforce in this sector.

"The industry in this state will never be back to the employment levels of the late 1970s," he added.

In Texas, where the oil and gas industry accounts for about 10 per cent of the state's economy,

Houston-based Tenneco Oil announced that it was axing 400 positions in its exploration and production units.

The company has already reduced its workforce by 18 per cent this year.

The KUNA report said the decline in oil prices had prompted nearly every oil company in the U.S. to reduce spending on exploration and production.

Chevron and Exxon, two of the world's largest oil companies, last week announced reductions in their capital budget.

San Francisco-based Chevron, which cut its capital budget by \$1.5 billion to \$3.5 billion, also ordered its managers to prepare contingency plans to reduce its workforce by 10 to 15 per cent, representing about 9,100 employees.

Exxon declined to say whether any job cuts were involved in its

\$2.8 billion capital spending.

Although oil and gas companies are reluctant to discuss the impact of declining oil prices on their workforce, trade groups and state and federal officials are piecing together a statistical picture of how hard the industry may be hit.

The American Petroleum Institute (API), the industry's leading trade group, told a congressional committee that the oil industry

could lose 20,000 jobs for every \$1 billion cut in the budget of the companies.

Testifying before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, API representative, Mr. Charles Quinn said 11,000 of those jobs would be lost in the oilfields and another 9,000 in industries supplying oil exploration and production services and equipment.

Citicorp offers to buy Quotron

NEW YORK (R) — Citicorp, the biggest U.S. banking company, has offered to buy Quotron Systems, a Los Angeles-based firm which provides stock quotations and other financial services.

Mr. Milton Mohr, chairman and chief executive officer of Quotron, said his company was "very interested" but he did not know if it would accept the offer.

A Citicorp spokesman said the company had offered \$680 million — \$19 a share — for Quotron, which has about 80,000 customers. Citicorp said it intended to operate Quotron as a separate subsidiary and hoped its management would stay on.

Banks in UAE consider setting up corporation to take over bad debts

ABU DHABI (R) — Recession-hit banks in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are considering setting up a corporation to assume liability for their non-performing loans, central bank governor, Sheikh Abdul Malik Al Hamar, said Wednesday.

The seven-emirate federation's 19 commercial banks had put aside some seven billion dirhams (\$1.9 billion) in provisions for bad debts, he told Reuters in an interview.

But further measures may be needed, he said, adding: "This question of bad debts still needs further joint cooperation by the federal government, local governments, banks and clients."

Falling oil income has slowed business activity, causing liquidity problems for indebted traders and contractors.

Bankers estimate the total value of non-performing loans in the UAE at 10 to 12 billion dirhams (\$2.7 to \$3.3 billion), about one-fourth of all loans, but Sheikh Hamar said this was "a little bit exaggerated."

He said the central bank had asked the banks association to draw up a formal proposal for a debt corporation to submit to federal and emirate authorities. The proposal would suggest ways of

operating and funding the body.

"The idea of having a separate corporation to deal with such loans is a good idea," he said. "But I don't think it should be totally government; maybe joint."

Sheikh Hamar said banks may be reluctant to help fund the scheme. "After the majority of banks have already provided for the previous loans and doubtful debts I don't think a majority of them are going to be interested."

UAE banks are widely expected to report lower profits for 1985 as a result of higher loan provisions, lower interest rates and stagnating loans and deposits.

Sheikh Hamar said they had nevertheless increased capital and assets and would not be seriously affected by projected cuts in government spending this year.

There was no urgent need for the government to raise fresh funds from the banking sector to compensate for lower oil revenues, he said, adding: "The income of this country is still re-

sulting from the sale of the pig-

ment."

He also forecast continued rationalisation of government spending, with basic services maintained, and sluggish economic activity for another two to three years.

Sheikh Hamar said local two bank mergers were now under discussion and one of them, between Ajman's First Gulf Bank and Ras Al Khaimah's Bank of the Arab Coast, had almost been finalised.

Two other banks which he did not identify — one from Abu Dhabi and the other from one of the northern emirates — are also considering a merger, but this would probably not happen this year, he said.

Three big bank mergers took place last year and Sheikh Hamar said then he hoped to see only 12 local banks by the end of 1985.

He said Wednesday the central bank, which has long advocated mergers as a means of strengthening the overcrowded banking sector, was following a policy of gentle persuasion.

"Because of this policy it takes a long time to negotiate between interested parties," he said.

Sheikh Hamar said no formal proposal had been submitted to



Abdul Malik Al Hamar

the central bank on the introduction of treasury bills, suggested last year by an Abu Dhabi finance official last year as a means of financing the budget deficit and stimulating investment.

He saw no pressing need for them or any other new monetary instruments. "These may inflate the situation unnecessarily," he said.

Asked to comment on prospects for the UAE banking sector this year, he said: "If we assume that economic activity is moderate, the majority of bad loans dealt with and continuous effort to moderate expenditure, we should not foresee greater difficulty than in 1985."

IMF chief calls upon industrialised states to help resolve Third World debt problems

WASHINGTON (R) — International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Jacques De Larosiere said Wednesday industrialised countries had a responsibility to revitalise the world economy so that debtor countries could resolve their problems.

He said wealthy countries should pursue policies that reduced interest rates and led to non-inflationary growth in world demand, while keeping their markets open.

"Such a role is in their self-interest," the IMF chief said in an address before the World Affairs Council in Los Angeles.

Mr. De Larosiere noted that in recent months there had been an unprecedented decline in oil prices, and a continued fall in interest rates.

He said this improved the outlook for many developing countries although the crude oil price collapse has been a blow to debtor countries that rely heavily on energy earnings.

"The system will have to face up to these challenges," Mr. De Larosiere said.

He also said the oil price decline and its differing impact on debtor countries was new evidence that each country should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Some debtor countries have suggested that the global debt situation was so serious that it demanded a review of the entire international monetary system.

The IMF has argued that each country was unique and economic reform should be tailored to conditions as they affected each individual economy.

Mr. De Larosiere noted the IMF's executive board is expected soon to approve a \$2.7 billion pool of funds that will be available to very poor countries on a virtually interest-free basis.

As he has in the past, the IMF chief executive emphasised that adequate financing from outside must go hand-in-hand with reform measures in debtor countries.

"Financing provides the necessary breathing space without it countries may be steered toward inefficient and anti-growth forms of adjustment," he said.

Kuwaiti 5-year plan may suffer \$24.4 billion deficit

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait could run up a seven billion dinar (\$2.4 billion) deficit in its current five-year plan because of lower oil prices, its finance minister said in remarks published Wednesday.

Mr. Jassim Mohammad Al Khorafi also told the daily Al Watan that ministries had been asked to reduce their budgets and that outlays on all non-essential projects would be shelved.

Kuwait's social and economic development plan for the fiscal years 1985/86 to 1989/90 envisages a shortfall of 3.75 billion dinars (\$13.0 billion).

Budget accounting, however, excludes annual allocations to the capital of the emirate's Third World aid agency — the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development — and a savings fund set up to ensure the prosperity of future generations.

These traditionally absorb 30 million dinars (\$104.7 million) a year and 10 per cent of state revenue respectively.

The actual underlying deficit for the period covered by the five-year plan would therefore have been 1.85 billion dinars (\$6.46 billion) under original estimates.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah was quoted this week as saying the budget would be slashed 25 per cent for the 1986/87 fiscal year starting in July.

U.S. to alter dollar design

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government announced Tuesday design changes in U.S. currency aimed at thwarting counterfeiters.

The changes are the culmination of several years of study into ways to make U.S. currency more difficult to duplicate on sophisticated new copying machines.

The Treasury Department considered and rejected such radical changes as using a different colour for U.S. money other than green. The changes announced Tuesday were considered so minor that they are not likely to be noticed unless the currency is studied carefully.

Treasury Secretary James Baker, who announced the changes, said production of the new currency would begin in 12 months with the first new notes entering circulation in 15 to 18 months.

The main change announced was addition of a clear polyester thread woven into the paper. The thread, which will run vertically on the left border of U.S. currency, will be visible to the eye when held up to the light but cannot be reproduced by copiers, the department said.

The other change will involve printing of the words "United States of America" repeatedly around the portrait in such small type that copiers will not be able to reproduce the tiny letters.

The department's changes, even though minor, were not likely to calm nervousness among people who are suspicious of any changes in U.S. currency.

Mr. Ron Paul, a former Republican congressman from Texas, has questioned the government's motives. He contends that the real reason the design of the money is being changed is to find out where people have hidden away large reserves of currency.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midday on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

One sterling	1.4765/75	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.3875/82	Canadian dollars
	2.2600/10	West German marks
	2.5510/20	Dutch guilders
	1.8952/9002	Swiss francs
	46.27/32	Belgian francs
	6.9620/70	French francs
	1527/1538	Italian lire
	176.40/50	Japanese yen
	176.50/2200	Swedish crowns
	7.250/1300	Norwegian crowns
	8.3450/3530	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	349.00/349.50	U.S. dollars

LONDON STOCK MARKET

LONDON (R) — Share prices closed off the highs following Tuesday's U.K. budget and a one percentage point cut in bank base rates on Wednesday.

At 1530 GMT the FT 30 was 13.5 up at 1,388.1 and the FTSE 100 was 14.6 firmer at 1,659.0 after touching respective record highs of 1,388.9 and 1,661.4.

The market opened higher in continuation of Tuesday's late gains on well received budget proposals with prices mostly reflecting the widely expected cut in base rates. Shares met some profit-taking around mid-session but the underlying tone remains firm, dealers said.

Government bonds showed gains ranging to as much as two points in the longer dated issues.

Banks firmed with Lloyds up 34p to 634, and Natwest 29p higher at 884, in continuation of Tuesday's late gain in a reaction to the absence of a feared financial services tax in the budget, dealers said.

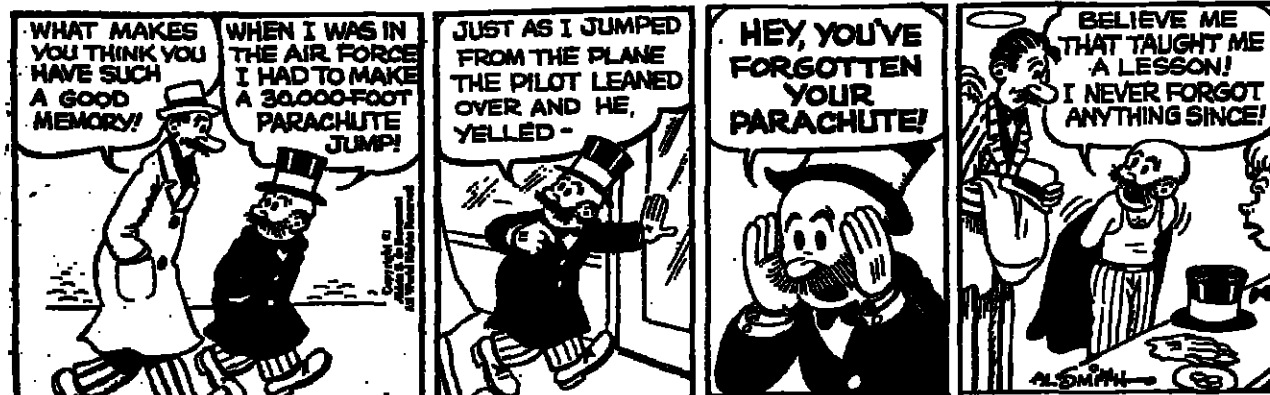
Life insurances were lower, mainly due to budget tax changes, dealers added. Legal and General lost 28p to 784. Composites were firmer as in Guardian Royal 14p higher at 855. Brokers Wilks Faber were 3p down at 444 after results for 1985.

Horoscope and crosswords not received

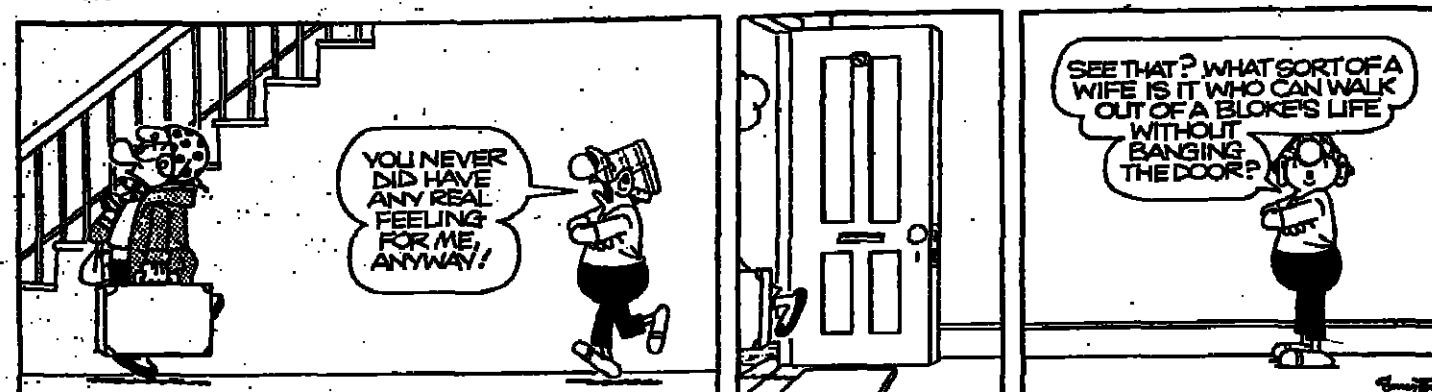
Peanuts



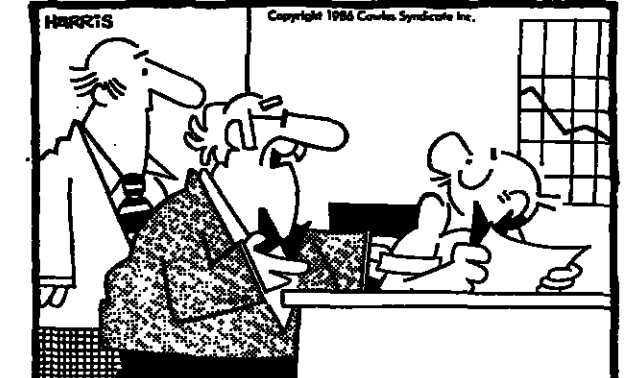
Mutt 'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



THE BETTER HALF



"A smart business learns from its mistakes. And here we have Stanley Parker University."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumble: KNIFE - ABHOR COMMON EMPIRE
Answer: What the peaceful vegetarian was never about to do with anyone - PICK A BONE

250 Filipino exiles return home to a hero's welcome

Aquino makes symbolic cuts in fuel prices

MANILA (R) — The biggest single group of Filipino exiles to return home since Corazon Aquino became president arrived here Wednesday to a joyous welcome.

Arriving on what they dubbed a "freedom flight," the 250 Filipinos, including some who spent up to 14 years in exile, were met at Manila airport by government officials and supporters who held streamers which read "Welcome: Exiles and freedom fighters from the U.S." Their Philippine Airlines Boeing 747 parked at the spot where Mrs. Aquino's husband Benigno was shot dead when he returned from exile in August 1983.

The killing set off events which led to his wife's rise to power and the flight into exile last month of deposed President Ferdinand Marcos.

A brass band played as young women in national dress placed flower necklaces on each arrival. Most fled the country when Marcos imposed martial law in 1972.

"I feel good. It is wonderful to breathe the air of freedom again in our homeland," Cecil Alvarez told reporters, tears streaming down her face.

Alvarez, a popular stage actress

before she fled to the United States 13 years ago, said thousands more Filipinos there also planned to return.

The passengers included American Steve Pinales, accused by Marcos of trying to kill him and his family in 1979.

Pinales, who married into the Lopez family, one of the richest dynasties in the Philippines until its property was taken over during martial law, said the group's return marked the victory of good over "the forces of evil."

"This is a glorious day," said Pinales, who wore a yellow shirt emblazoned with the words "a return voyage to a free country."

"This is the day we have been dreaming of for many, many years. We come here to pay homage, not to receive homage," he added.

A Filipino couple, whose two teenage children were born in the United States, said: "This is the first time our kids have stepped on Philippine soil. We came to pay tribute to the courage of the Fil-

ipino people."

Among those who welcomed the Filipinos were Aurora Aquino, mother of Benigno Aquino.

Meanwhile Mrs. Aquino Wednesday ordered mainly symbolic cuts in petrol prices, giving the first indication that she plans a cautious approach to solving the Philippines' economic problems.

Mrs. Aquino, presiding at only her second cabinet meeting since taking office three weeks ago, heard only bad news about the country's financial state.

Budget Minister Adelberto Romulo doubled to 10 billion pesos (\$500 million) the estimate he gave last week of the deficit for the first three months of this year.

The economic discussions took up most of the meeting and Mrs. Aquino again put off a decision on whether to declare her administration a revolutionary government as a way out of the constitutional crisis caused by her sudden rise to power.

There is a rift in the cabinet about whether abolition of the present parliament and declaration of a revolutionary government is the best way to rule.

Presidential Spokesman Rene

Saguisag said Mrs. Aquino would announce her decision early next week.

Mrs. Aquino, who set the tone for the meeting with an appeal Tuesday for Filipinos to pay their taxes because the treasury was almost empty, urged businessmen to pass on fuel price cuts with lower costs of manufactured goods and cheaper transport.

Mr. Saguisag said the president told the cabinet that Marcos was guilty of "gross and criminal mismanagement" for the state of the economy.

Economists estimated the average drop of 50 centavos (2.5 U.S. cents) a litre in fuel prices would lose the government the equivalent of about \$104 million in revenue from indirect taxes.

A litre of regular petroleum, the fuel used by most motorists, fell to 6.78 pesos from 7.03.

Supporters of Mrs. Aquino, swept into power by a "people power" rebellion which forced Marcos to flee to Hawaii on Feb. 26, had hoped for bigger cuts.

But she was swayed against a dramatic gesture of price cuts by economic advisers who warned the country could not afford them.

Prince Andrew to marry Sarah Ferguson

LONDON (R) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth Wednesday announced the engagement of Prince Andrew, one of the world's most eligible bachelors, to commoner Sarah Ferguson.

The two 26-year-olds are expected to marry in Westminster Abbey later this year.

Notice of the royal engagement was posted at the gates of Buckingham Palace, ending weeks of intense speculation that the Queen's second son had finally chosen a bride.

The announcement said: "It is with the greatest pleasure that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh announce the betrothal of their beloved son, Prince Andrew, to Miss Sarah Ferguson, daughter of Major Ronald Ferguson and Mrs. Hector Barrantes."

Prince Andrew, fourth in line of succession to the throne, was a childhood playmate of his princess-to-be but their romance only blossomed last year.

Auburn-haired Sarah, who works in London with a Swiss-based publishing firm, has an immaculate social pedigree. Her father is Maj. Ronald Ferguson, polo manager to Prince Charles, Britain's future king.

The major said in an interview that Prince Andrew had formally asked him for his daughter's hand. "I am delighted," he said.

The betrothal will deprive British tabloid newspapers of one of their favourite subjects — Prince Andrew's romantic flings with a succession of actresses and models.

Prince Andrew, whose exploits earned him the nickname "rampy Andy," has just completed a two-year tour of duty as a helicopter pilot aboard the naval frigate Brazen.

Sarah, a close friend of Princess Diana, was only 14 when her parents divorced. Both remarried. Her mother Susan is now the wife of Argentine polo professional Hector Barrantes.

Sources close to the royal court said the marriage is likely to take place in the autumn.

It will be Britain's first royal wedding since Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer in 1981.

Westminster Abbey, the likely setting, has been a centre of royal pageantry since William the Conqueror's coronation in 1066. Since then 37 sovereigns have been crowned there and it is the burial place for 18 kings and 14 queens.

Sarah was first spotted by royal watchers when Prince Andrew escorted her to the Ascot races last June. Speculation over an engagement intensified as the months went by, peaking with a new year invitation to Sandringham, the Queen's retreat in rural Norfolk.

Debutant, Britain's blueblood, said Sarah was descended from King Charles II and nine of her great-grandparents belonged to peerage families.

Museveni's troops seize northern Ugandan town

KAMPALA (R) — President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) is poised to extend its control over all of Uganda following the capture of the northern town of Kitgum, Western diplomats said Wednesday.

Radio Kampala said the fall of Kitgum, 50 kilometres from the Sudanese border, occurred Tuesday without any encounters with soldiers of the former Kampala government which the NRA ousted in late January.

The NRA is now expected to launch an attack soon on the north western town of Arua, where thousands of former government troops have fled.

Western diplomats said Mr. Museveni's troops were likely to meet little resistance as the opposing forces were generally demoralised and many had given up their arms.

Ugandan newspapers reported that Kitgum was largely deserted as the NRA moved in, and many former government soldiers had fled either to their home villages or into Sudan.

When the NRA first seized Kampala from the military government of Gen. Tito Okello, there were fears that the country might be split in two, between areas controlled by Museveni's forces and those under former government soldiers.

But the NRA met little resistance as they thrust north, and scored a big victory 10 days ago when they seized Gulu, 80 kilometres southwest of Kitgum, after a short battle.

Former army chief Lt. Gen. Bazilio Okello had vowed to fight to the last man at Gulu, but he fled as the NRA advanced and is believed to have crossed into Sudan, according to Western diplomats.

Japanese court rules on screening history books

TOKYO (R) — The Tokyo high court ruled Wednesday that the state may screen Japanese school textbooks, reviving fears of censorship and possible whitewashing of Japanese actions in World War II.

The court ruled against former Professor Saburo Ienaga in a 12-year-old appeal case in which he argued that state screening violated freedom of education guaranteed by the constitution.

It upheld the Education Ministry's order for numerous "revisions and deletions in Ienaga's 1962 high school history text, including passages referring to World War II."

According to Ienaga's early court testimony, one passage that fell foul of the ministry read: "The war was glorified and defeated by the Japanese army and navy and their atrocities in the battlefield were all covered up."

Allegations to school history books about Japanese military aggression in the war sparked a major diplomatic row with China and both North and South Korea four years ago.

China was angered by revisions which called Japan's invasion simply an "advance" and glossed over atrocities during the occupation from 1927 to 1945, especially the

1937 Nanking Massacre.

North and South Korea both condemned the texts as distortions because they softened the picture of Japan's colonisation of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945.

Ultimately, the Japanese government reinstated the original versions.

Japan's Teachers' Union has long opposed textbook revisions saying they are linked to a revival of militarism in the government, citing efforts to extend the singing of the national anthem, "Kimigayo" and the raising of the national flag in all public schools.

China was also angered by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone's visit last year to the Yasukuni Shrine National War Memorial in Tokyo, because war criminals are enshrined there.

Wednesday's ruling upheld the Ministry of Education argument that under the constitution it could intervene in education and overturned a 1974 district court verdict that said the state had gone too far in demanding revisions.

Ienaga, 72, a former professor at Tokyo University of Education, said he will appeal to the supreme court. He first brought suit in 1962.

Police open fire, impose curfew on Punjab town

CHANDIGARH, India (R) — Police fired on protesting Hindus in Punjab Wednesday, injuring three people in a new outbreak of communal violence in the troubled north Indian state.

Police said a curfew was slapped on the town of Muktsar after the shooting, bringing to four the number of Punjab towns under curfew.

Para-military police reinforcements were rushed to the town of Nakodar, which was put under three-day curfew after overnight cases of arson and calls by the militant Hindu Shiv Sena group for a protest strike, police said.

Curfew was also in force in Jullundur, and in Batala where five people were killed and 16 injured in Sikh-Hindu street battles on Sunday.

Punjab Chief Minister Surjit Singh Barnala Tuesday night told the state assembly in Chandigarh the Sikh-Hindu clashes were unprecedented in Punjab. "This has never happened before and it is a dangerous trend," he declared.

The Muktsar shooting came after Hindu shopkeepers protested against attempts by militant Sikhs to make them shut down after the death of militant Sikh leader Jagjit Singh Rode.

India captures second jailbreaker

NEW DELHI (R) — Police said they had captured the second of six men who escaped from a Delhi prison with Charles Sobhraj, but India's most wanted criminal remained on the loose despite a nationwide manhunt.

Senior police official R.K. Sharma told Reuters police caught Bhola Ram Wednesday in the central city of Gwalior, 300 kilometres south of Delhi.

"But there is still no trace of Sobhraj," Sharma said.

Dinesh Kumar, another escapee, surrendered on Monday night at the top-security Tihar Jail from which the group fled the previous day.

Police said Kumar told them he and Bhola Ram also ate drugged sweets fed by two accomplices of Sobhraj to jail guards before the breakout. They said the

sweets may have been spiked with the drug methaqualone.

Sobhraj, 42, strolled past the drugged guards and into a getaway car. But Kumar and Ram stumbled out of the jail semi-dressed and wandered off into the city, police said.

Ten Tihar Jail officials have been arrested for possible complicity with Sobhraj, and an embarrassed government has set up an official inquiry to probe the jailbreaker.

Kumar told interrogators he slept off the effects of the drug at Delhi's railway station.

Sobhraj, a Vietnam-born French national who was once on Interpol's most-wanted list, has been charged by Indian and Thai police with a string of robberies-murders in which the victims were drugged. He is also wanted in France, Greece, Nepal, Turkey, Iran and Hong Kong.

He escaped while facing possible extradition to Thailand after 10 years in Indian jails.

The subject of two bestsellers, Sobhraj was moved from a maximum security wing of the jail to a less heavily guarded cell in January because a Delhi journalist wanted to interview him for a third book, police said.

But the journalist, Kumkum Chandra, wrote in the Hindustan Times newspaper Wednesday that the twice-weekly interviews took place in the office of the jail superintendent.

"He was secretive. And apprehensive about giving material," Chandra wrote. She quoted Sobhraj as saying: "Don't worry, you will finish the book. I will stay in India. I love India."

Reagan to send advisers to Contras

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams said President Reagan plans to send up to 48 U.S. military advisers to Central America if Congress approves his \$100 million aid request for Nicaraguan rebels.

He told the House Appropriations Subcommittee, which is seeking an explanation of how the \$70 million in military aid and \$30 million in non-lethal assistance would be spent, that some money would be used to buy anti-aircraft equipment.

The House was scheduled to begin debating the request with a vote set for Thursday. Both opponents and backers of the aid have expressed confidence they will prevail.

Administration officials said last week they would consider sending U.S. military advisers to train the so-called Contra rebels

who are seeking to overthrow the leftist Sandinista government.

Mr. Abrams said Tuesday the maximum number of U.S. trainers committed to the Contra effort would be "three or four dozen," about the same number operating in El Salvador.

He said some training would be done in the United States but most would take place in Central America.

The Contras operate from bases in Honduras near the border with Nicaragua. The United States conducts near-continuous military exercises in Honduras and has built military facilities there.

The issue of military trainers has been a sensitive one since Vietnam because many lawmakers see them as the first step toward direct U.S. involvement in foreign wars.

Mr. Abrams also said part of the \$100 million would be used to

purchase anti-armour and anti-tank equipment. He refused to be more specific, saying Washington did not want the Sandinistas to know how the funds are spent.

The Washington Post has reported that the U.S. might help the Contras buy Soviet-made SAM-7 anti-aircraft missiles on the black market if Congress approved military aid for them.

A congressional source told Reuters that the Contras already had 14 SAM-7 missiles and added: "Yes, of course that's what they are going to use (the aid package) for."

House Speaker Thomas O'Neill, a vigorous opponent of Mr. Reagan's proposal, criticised the plans for advisers and anti-aircraft missiles.

"Our role as arms supplier has escalated to the role of advisers in the field," the Massachusetts Democrat said.

U.S. House approves \$4.3 b plan to protect missions

WASHINGTON (R) — Congress has approved a \$4.3 billion plan aimed at protecting U.S. embassies and other diplomatic missions around the world against attack.

The measure passed by 389 votes to seven in the House of Representatives but must still be considered by the Senate.

"This bill represents an unprecedented effort by Congress to update U.S. security measures across the board," said Congressman Olympia Snowe who co-sponsored the bill.

Most of the money would fund a five-year programme to upgrade or rebuild 254 embassies, consulates, missions and other official buildings, including a new embassy in Tel Aviv, a consular building in Jerusalem and a chancery in Vienna.

The measure incorporates recommendations made last June by a panel on overseas security chaired by retired Adm. Bobby Inman and by Vice-President George Bush's task force on fighting terrorism.

The Inman panel, set up by Secretary of State George Shultz after the 1983 and 1984 bombing of U.S. facilities in Beirut, concluded that more than half the missions did not meet minimum security standards. It urged the administration to take "prudent steps" to discourage future terrorist acts.

Speakers favouring the legislation said in the debate Tuesday that terrorist attacks around the world had increased from more than 600 in 1984 to more than 800 last year and noted that Americans were targets in 30 per cent of the attacks.

The plan would also authorise \$10 million next year in rewards for information on international terrorism or drug trafficking. It creates a fund for the victims of terrorism and their families.

In addition, it bars exports of military equipment and technology to countries listed by the administration as sponsoring terrorism.

Libya, Syria, Cuba, Iran and South Yemen are on the list.

Critics of the bill have said increased embassy security would hurt the U.S. image of openness, limit contact with the local population and cause terrorists to choose less fortified targets such as U.S. businessmen or other civilians living abroad.

Scientists discover Sea Daisy

WELLINGTON (R) — What creature has no stomach, stores food in its feet and has 10 sexual organs?

The answer, according to Australian and New Zealand scientists, is the "Sea Daisy" — a bizarre form of marine life which has been discovered living in waterlogged wood deep under the ocean.

It has been classed by the scientists as an Echinoderm, one of the family which includes starfish, sea urchins, brittle stars and sea cucumbers. Until now it had been assumed that all classes of Echinoderm had been discovered.

A scientific paper announcing the discovery has been accepted by the British science journal Nature, one of its authors said Wednesday.

The Sea Daisy, named after its daisy-like shape, stores food in its feet, has no stomach and lives in a soup of bacteria in the holes of wood lying 1,000 metres under the sea.

Much of the underneath of the animal is taken up with 10 gonads, or sexual organs.

The paper's authors are Dr. Alan Baker, the New Zealand National Museum's assistant director, Dr. Helen Rotman, a research associate who is a specialist in starfish and Dr. Frank Rowe of the Australian Museum in Sydney.

Dr. Baker will give the first official preview of the find to New Zealand scientists at a joint meeting in Wellington of the Royal Society and the Victoria University Zoology Department.

Round and wafer-like, measuring between two millimetres and nine millimetres across, sea daisies are unusual because of their circular shape. Their scientific name, which will not be used until printed in Nature, dwells on their roundness.

Dr. Baker said that unlike all other Echinoderms, the Sea Daisy's tube feet were in one complete ring round the lower edge of the body. He said this ring of feet was unknown in the biological world and was apparently used to store food in place of a stomach.

A thin membrane stretches across the underneath of its body, like plastic film across an upside-down saucer. This is lined with food-absorbing cells like those found on stomach linings.

Top performers in SDI research receive awards

WASHINGTON (R) — Top performers in President Reagan's "Star Wars" defence research programme have been honoured at a banquet resembling a Hollywood Oscar ceremony.

Tuesday night's fest, sponsored by the private American Defence Preparedness Association (ADPA), featured film clips of missiles being destroyed in flight, trophy presentations, and speeches of gratitude from winners.

The ADPA's first annual awards were organised to recognise those working to transform Mr. Reagan's dream of a space-based shield against nuclear attack into a reality, an ADPA spokesman told reporters.

Winners of the first Strategic Defence Award included James Fletcher, newly-appointed head of the space agency NASA who had presided over a 1983 study which concluded space defence

was feasible, and former White House Science Adviser George Keyworth, who lobbied for the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) before leaving office.

Each was given a gold medal on a black leather strap.

The winner of the first annual Strategic Defence Achievement Award was a military-industrial research team which last year became the first to destroy an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) in flight, using a small homing vehicle as a weapon.

The award — a 50-pound, one-metre tall, pyramid-shaped trophy — was presented to the team after a short film of the target missile's spectacular explosion in space drew loud applause from the audience.

Runner-up was a team of Litton Industries scientists who, working in Hawaii, demonstrated that laser weapons could hit targets in space.

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN
AND OWAIN SEABY
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WHAT'S BEEN PLAYED?

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A Q 6 3
♥ A 4 2
♦ A 10 9 2
♣ 7 4

WEST EAST
♠ 9 8 4 ♠ K 7 2
♥ J 8 6 5 ♥ 10 7
♦ 8 6 ♦ 7 5 4
♣ A 10 8 2 ♣ K J 5 3

SOUTH
♠ J 10 5
♥ K Q 9 3
♦ K Q J 3
♣ Q 6

The bidding:
North East South West
1 0 Pass 1 0 Pass
1 1 Pass 3 0 Pass
3 0 Pass 4 0 Pass

Opening lead: Ace of ♠.

You impose a great strain on your memory when you sit down at the bridge table. You have to remember what conventions you play, what cards have been played, what cards are high, and sometimes even what conventions your opponents use!

Ron Klinger, an Australian internationalist, has made an interesting attempt to make your task easier. Improve Your Bridge Memory by Ron Klinger. Gollancz, 98 pp., paperback. Available from The Bridge World, 39 West 94th Street, New York, N.Y. 10024 for \$8.25 including postage. It contains much useful advice, but some suggestions

are impractical. Still, it makes interesting reading.

In this hand from a rubber bridge game, Klinger relates that after leading the ace of clubs, West shifted to a spade. East won the king, cashed the king of clubs and exited with a spade. Declarer won the jack and cashed his high trumps. He could not remember whether his nine of hearts was high, so he led that. As a result, he went down four instead of one.

"Miscounting trumps is a common failing and not being certain whether a particular spot card is high is just as common..."

"On most hands, the number of cards missing in a suit is important only for one or two suits, the trump suit and your long suit outside trumps. The moment dummy appears, tell yourself how many cards there are in dummy and your own hand in the critical suits! and immediately tell yourself how many cards they started with in the suit!"

"From then on you need concern yourself only with the cards which they play in that suit... When it comes to drawing trumps, instead of the lengthy 'four have gone and three have gone' routine, you are concerned only with the trumps opponents have played. The numbers with which you will be working are much smaller, the number of arithmetic steps far fewer and the chance of error is accordingly greatly reduced."



Israel to check blood banks for AIDS

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel will begin screening its blood banks for signs of AIDS and will set up clinics to diagnose sufferers of the killer disease, health officials have said. They said 23 cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) had been reported in Israel. Tests to detect antibodies formed after contact with the AIDS virus will be carried out at the Central Blood Bank in Tel Aviv and at major hospitals, and examination of suspected AIDS sufferers will be offered at seven clinics from April 15.

China executes policeman for rape

PEKING (R) — A Chinese policeman has been executed for fraud, corruption and raping women at gunpoint, the local newspaper in Xian, Central China, reported. The official Shaanxi Daily said Li Zeyang, 47, was shot on Saturday. It said Li misused his position, "sometimes brazenly using his handgun" to rape eight women and "obscenely humiliate" three others.

Prospector stumbles on \$1m diamond

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — A Brazilian gold prospector returning home from work stumbled on a stone the size of an egg which turned out to be a diamond worth \$1 million, officials have said. They said the prospector, whose name was not disclosed, was in the man in charge of the field, will keep the find's share of the find. The gem was found on Saturday on a farm in Carmo Do Paranaíba, a town in the south-western state of Minas Gerais.

Antibiotics make Chinese children deaf

PEKING (R) — Hundreds of Chinese children have been injured to deaf mutes by excessive antibiotics administered by ignorant medical workers, the China Daily said Wednesday. It said 948 children at Shanghai's school for the deaf and mute had had their speech and hearing damaged through improper medical treatment and the rate of drug-induced handicap in the city had risen ten-fold since the 1950s.

Teacher jailed for student's death

TSUCHIURA, Japan (R) — A former high school teacher was jailed for three years for causing the death of a 16-year-old student in a dispute over a hair dryer. The court was told that Kazumori Amamori kicked and beat Toshimasa Takahashi at a hotel because he took a hair dryer on a school excursion. The student later died in hospital. The school had ordered students not to take hair dryers on the trip. Amamori was dismissed as a teacher.

Woman pleads not guilty to breast-baring charge

SYDNEY (R) — A woman alleged to have bared her breasts at Queen Elizabeth appeared in court Wednesday wearing a jumpsuit open to the waist and pleaded not guilty. Francesca D'Espiney, 43, is charged with offensive behaviour and assaulting a policewoman on March 5 when she is alleged to have exposed her breasts to the queen and Prince Philip outside Sydney's Opera House during the couple's 12-day Australian tour. Counsel for D'Espiney told Magistrate Bruce Brown that he was having trouble getting a certain witness from England. His client would defend the charges, he added. Brown remanded D'Espiney for a hearing on Aug. 1.

Toilet seat price drops from \$317 to \$1

WASHINGTON (R) — The bottom dropped out of the toilet seat business as Lockheed Corp cut the price on its jet toilet seat from \$317 to \$1. A Lockheed spokesman said the item, which Pentagon critics had pointed to as a symbol of government waste, had been discounted to "take toilet seats out of the headlines." At issue was the cost of toilet seat covers for the air force C-5 jet transport. The items were originally priced at \$317 each but were reduced to \$286 after a congressional investigation.

Weekend Crossword not received